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Vágnost v anglických univerzitních přednáškách z oblasti humanitních věd

Vagueness in English university Arts and Humanities lectures

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Vedoucí práce: doc. PhDr. Markéta Malá, Ph.D.

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Jméno a příjmení

Abstrakt

Bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na klasifikaci a popis funkcí jednotlivých skupin vágních jazykových prostředků, vymezuje rozdíly mezi mluveným a psaným akademickým registrem a funkce jazyka v akademických přednáškách. Materiál pro praktickou část je čerpán z British Academic Spoken English (BASE) korpusu, ze kterého je v první části analýzy excerpováno 6 úryvků z přednášek z oblasti humanitních věd, každý o 2000 slovech. Analýza obsahuje detailní rozbor vágních prostředků v úryvcích přednášek, jejich klasifikaci do skupin popsaných v teoretické části práce, popis jejich nejčastějších komunikativních funkcí a míst nejfrekventovanějšího výskytu v přednáškách. Druhá část analýzy je založena na všech přednáškách z oblasti humanitních věd v BASE korpusu a popisuje tři slovní druhy, které se nejčastěji vyskytují ve vágních jazykových prostředcích z předchozího výzkumu. Analýza zkoumá nejčastější kolokace a bezprostřední okolí vybraných slov.

Klíčová slova: vágnost, univerzitní přednášky, funkce jazyka

Abstract

The present thesis focuses on the classification and description of individual groups of vague language devices. Furthermore, it describes the differences between the written and spoken academic register and the various functions of language in academic lectures. The material for the analysis is drawn from the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus. The first section of the analysis is based on six excerpts from Arts and Humanities lectures, each 2000 words long. The vague language devices in the excerpts are analysed and classified into the groups described in the theoretical part of the thesis. The functions of the individual groups and the reasons why the occurrence of some of the groups is prominent in different parts of lectures are analysed. The second analysis describes three word classes with the highest occurrence in the previous research. This analysis is based on all Arts and Humanities lectures in the BASE corpus. It describes the most frequent collocations and the immediate surroundings of the words examined.

Key words: vagueness, university lectures, functions of language

Table of Contents

1 Introduction 8
2 Theoretical background 9
2.1 Vagueness vs. ambiguity and ‘implicitness’ 9
2.2 The role of vagueness in communication 10
3 Vague language devices 13
3.1 Terminology 13
3.2 Hedges 13
3.3 General nouns 14
3.4 Discourse markers 15
3.5 Stance markers 16
3.6 Coordination tags 17
3.7 Approximating adverbs 17
3.8 Quantifiers 18
4 Language in university lectures 20
4.1 Language in university lectures: Introduction 20
4.1.1 Definition of register 20
4.1.2 Spoken vs. written use of university language 20
4.2 Functions of lecture discourse 21
4.2.1 Informing 22
4.2.2 Elaborating 23
4.2.3 Organizing discourse 24
4.2.4 Evaluating 25
4.2.5 Interacting 26
4.2.6 Managing the class 27
5 Material and methods 28
6 Bottom-up text analysis 30
6.1 Bottom-up text analysis: Introduction 30
6.2 Distribution of vague language devices 30
6.2.1 Hedges 31
6.2.2 General nouns 32
6.2.3 General pronouns 33
6.2.4 General verbs 34
6.2.5 Discourse markers 35

6.2.6 Stance markers 36
6.2.7 Modal verbs 37
6.2.8 Coordination tags 38
6.2.9 Approximating adverbs 38
6.2.10 Quantifiers 39
6.3 Bottom-up text analysis: Conclusion 39
7 Corpus-supported analysis 41
7.1 Corpus-supported analysis: Introduction 41
7.2 Nouns 41
7.3 Pronouns 48
7.4 Adverbs 49
7.5 Corpus-supported analysis: Conclusion 51
8 Conclusion 52
9 References and Sources 54
10 České résumé 55
Appendix 59

List of figures and tables

Figure 1: Vague language devices: representation in six lecture extracts 31

Figure 2: Hedges: representation in six lecture extracts 31

Figure 3: General pronouns: representation in six lecture extracts 34

Figure 4: Discourse markers: representation in six lecture extracts 35

Table 1: Nouns: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities 41

Table 2: The left collocates of *people* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood) 42

Table 3: The left collocates of *way* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood) 44

Table 4: The concordance of *in one/some way or an/other* 45

Table 5: The left collocates of *things* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood) 47

Table 6: Vague pronouns: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities 48

Table 7: Adverbs: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities 50

1 Introduction

Vagueness appears to be a stigmatized area of linguistics, vague expressions being often considered imprecise, lacking in clarity and generally undesirable. Vague language is viewed as having the potential to disrupt the fluency of verbal exchange and many believe that it is best to avoid using it. This point of view, however, has been proven to be too simple, as it has become apparent that vague language can serve a number of essential purposes in communication, when used in an appropriate context (Channel, 1994: 1). As will be shown, vague language devices have a wide variety of application possibilities, ranging from situations when the speaker cannot remember the exact term, to moments when a vague expression may be considered more polite than a precise one. Realizing the possibilities which the use of vague language brings to the communicative strategy of a speaker can be an advantage in speech production. It is for this reason that it seems important to examine vague language in greater detail.

The language of academic lectures might not be generally associated with the use of vague language devices, given the specialized academic topics. However, it could be expected that the discourse of lectures comprises a relatively high number of vague language devices, mainly due to the time pressure during the lecture and the consequent impossibility to think about precise formulations. This could create an interesting contrast to the content of the lectures itself, which is based on materials written with academic precision. The present study will attempt to summarize the research carried out on vague language so far and it will briefly describe the use of language in academic lectures in general. Finally, it will analyse the frequency of use and functions of individual groups of vague language devices in the arts and humanities lectures in the BASE corpus.

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Vagueness vs. ambiguity and 'implicitness'

There are a number of definitions of the word 'vagueness'. For the purposes of this thesis, we will be working with the definition of vagueness from *Vague Language* by Joanna Channel (1994):

An expression or word is vague if:

a. it can be contrasted with another word or expression which appears to render the same proposition;

b. it is 'purposely and unabashedly vague';

c. its meaning arises from [...] 'intrinsic uncertainty' [...] (Channel, 1994: 20).

When creating vague content of an utterance, it is important to make the formulation comprehensible to the listener. Despite the potentially confusing use of vague language, speakers share certain extralinguistic knowledge which helps them understand the message. The hearer is required to engage not only his or her knowledge of the language, but also the pragmatic aspect of language use (ibid.: 198). Vague expressions are not "evidence of linguistic inadequacy on the part of the speaker or writer. They are part of the linguistic repertoire of the competent language user, who uses them to accomplish particular communicative goals" (ibid.: 197).

Vagueness can sometimes be confused with ambiguity. The similarity between these two concepts consists in their lack of clarity and potential confusion they both may create in the hearer. There is, however, a difference between the unclarity of the two concepts - an ambiguous expression is easier to understand as it has two or more distinct meanings and there is usually no difficulty in recovering the correct one from the context (ex. 1). A vague word or phrase, on the other hand, does not have a single distinct meaning; it is rather blurry and provides room for imagination (ibid.: 35) (ex. 2).

Another term which should be contrasted with vagueness is 'implicitness'. This concept rests on a different level than vagueness and ambiguity, as it can potentially coincide with either one of them. 'Implicitness' comprises an underlying meaning and we can use vague

language or other language tools to express it (ex. 3). It is therefore possible for vague language to allude to an implicit meaning; nevertheless, in many cases a vague expression can be taken at face value, only giving a fuzzier impression than a precise formulation (Cutting, 2007:4).

(1) [three student friends talking about music]

A: Tom Bennet plays the trombone

B: No he doesn't, it's something else brass

C: Well in that case, it must be a trumpet (Channel, 1994: 35)

(2) I'm talking about acceptable middle class language and **sort of**

working class language the **thing** that Bernstein **you know sort of**

elaborated code **and things like that** (Channel, 1994: 133)

(3) Alan: Are you going to Paul's party?
Barb: I have to work.[1]

2.2 The role of vagueness in communication

As the definition quoted above shows, there are several quite distinct purposes for using vague language in communication. All of these have one feature in common - they function as social tools, rendering language appropriate in certain situations or helping the speaker to transform the message in a way which helps get it across in the desired impression. Very

[1] Davis, W. (2014) 'Implicature'. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014). Available on-line from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/implicature/ (accessed: 24 July 2015)

precise use of language, however practical and time-efficient, is only appropriate in a limited number of contexts (especially on very formal occasions, e.g. public speeches). In other situations, the speaker can appear prim and pedantic.

Vague expressions make "an important contribution to naturalness and the informal, convergent tenor of everyday talk" (McCarthy, 1998: 108–18)[2]. Using vague language devices is often advisable in order to make the language more socially acceptable for others (e.g. to avoid sounding offensive or pretentious) (Channel, 1994: 162). Another use of vague language consists in protecting oneself from revealing the lack of knowledge on a certain subject or trying to conceal having forgotten some information. A frequent cause for using vague expressions is uncertainty or a lexical gap (i.e. a situation when speakers "make use of vagueness to convey meaning in situations where they do not have at their disposal the necessary words or phrases for the concepts they wish to express" (ibid.: 180)); not uncommon are cases of willful withholding of information which the speaker does not wish to be revealed by the listener (ibid.: 194).

Probably the most social use of vague language concerns groups of people who share certain knowledge, be it specialists in a distinct field or a group of friends. The use of vague expressions (especially using implicit meaning) in these cases can be helpful - the communication within the group of professionals becomes more efficient, and in the case of an informal social group, vague language has a strong social aspect - it helps create a certain identity and solidarity with the other members (Cutting, 2007: 8). Nevertheless, the situation in both the cases can become problematic as the 'implicitness' is often used to exclude outsiders.

In the case of a group of people specialized in a certain field (e.g. bureaucrats), it is often difficult, if not impossible, for the 'outsiders' to understand the language. Confusion may arise when there are "gaps between distinct and insufficiently coincident cognitive worlds", as these can separate "insiders from outsiders, members of institutions from clients of those institutions, and elites from the normal citizen uninitiated in the arcana of bureaucratic

[2] McCarthy, M. (1998) *Spoken Language and Applied Linguistics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cited in Cutting, 2007: 8.

language and life" (Wodak, 1996: 2)[3]. The same rule applies to the issue of second-language acquisition. Lack of precision is one of the most significant features of the informal communication (Channel, 1994: 27), including vague language devices that are part of the 'shared knowledge' of the native speakers. It is exactly this feature that non-proficient foreign learners lack, which creates an obstacle in both creating natural speech and being able to receive particular cues from other speakers. It is therefore not uncommon that the foreign learner is set apart in the conversation and this separation from the native-speaker majority can have large social consequences for a language learner in a foreign country (Roberts, 2003: 117)[4].

[3] Wodak, R. (1996) *Disorders of Discourse*. London: Longman. Cited in Cutting, 2007: 9.

4 Roberts, C. (2003) 'Language Acquisition or Language Socialisation in and Through Discourse? Towards a Redefinition of the Domain of SLA', in C. Candlin and N. Mercer *English Language Teaching in its Social Context.* London: Routledge. Cited in Cutting, 2007: 9.

3 Vague language devices

3.1 Terminology

There is not much agreement on the terminology of vague language, therefore there are a number of different terms used for each of the groups of vague expressions. For the purposes of this thesis, we will be working with the terminology from Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (Biber et al., 1990; henceforth LGSWE). The most common categories of vague language devices will be described below: hedges, general nouns, discourse markers, stance markers, coordination tags, approximating adverbs and quantifiers.

3.2 Hedges

Together with general nouns and vague coordination tags, hedges are the most apparent markers of vagueness in communication. The category of hedges comprises expressions such as *kind of*, *sort of* and *like* (Quaglio, 2009: 74). Vague language devices, especially hedges, "are not empty fillers, inserted by speakers to give processing time. They are deliberately chosen for their contribution to the communicative message" (Channel, 1994: 197).

Jucker et al. (2003: 1746) discuss the role of hedges in the transformation of the speaker's ideas and thoughts into an utterance: "[A]ny utterance is only an approximation to the thought the speaker has in mind. The degree of resemblance between this thought and the utterance varies. A hedge might be used to indicate that the degree of interpretive resemblance is not as close as the hearer might otherwise expect".

Hedges are sometimes used to express the uncertainty of the speaker - they enable him not to take full responsibility for his statements, which is a form of communicative strategy. This type of communication allows the 'implicitness' to assume its role, as the 'shared knowledge' of the communicating parties is necessary for the receiver of the message to recognize the referent and place it into its semantic category (McCarthy, 2004: 9-12)[5]. This 'strategic

[5] McCarthy, M. (2004) 'Lessons from the analysis of chunks'. *The Language Teacher* 28(7). Cited in Quaglio, 2009: 75.

imprecision' (Leech, 2000: 695)[6] also has an important interactive function - it sends a signal to the listener to ask questions for clarification or replace the imprecise term with a more precise one if he or she has more knowledge on the subject (Quaglio, 2009: 75).

Another significant role of hedges is making the language sound less direct (sometimes directness has an undesirable effect, making the message sound too straightforward and impertinent) and more polite. They have the power to make expressions sound less harsh, soften criticism and make the verbal exchange generally more pleasant (ibid.: 76). The social aspect which the use of hedges brings to the communicative situation (the appeal to the shared knowledge) can be viewed as the most important function of hedges.

3.3 General nouns

General nouns, such as *thing*, *stuff* or *idea* contribute to the vagueness of conversation significantly. Their function is mainly practical, as they make the production of speech faster and easier. More precise forms of expression would mean longer explanations and even less fluency of speech, as the use of precise terms requires more time to think. These nouns therefore accelerate the speed of language production. Nevertheless, this advantage can turn against the speaker when the vague reference shows to be unclear to the listener and demands more time to be clarified (Quaglio, 2009: 77). In that case, however, the vague nouns contribute to the interactive nature of the verbal exchange.

The use of general nouns can be ascribed to two main communicative reasons:

1. When the speaker does not know or has forgotten a name or noun.

2. When the speaker does not wish to use a name or noun (Channel, 1994: 164).

There may be other reasons such as pronunciation problems, trying to avoid sounding pretentious or using a taboo or offensive word (ibid.: 162).

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[6] Leech, G. (2000) 'Grammars of spoken English: New outcomes of corpus-oriented research'. *Language Learning* 50(4). Cited in Quaglio, 2009: 74.

General nouns are found mainly in spoken language use or in written use attempting to imitate informal speech (ibid.: 164). Apart from trying to make the speech production faster or concealing information, there are other possible reasons for choosing to use a general noun instead of a precise term even if the speaker knows it: the speaker's strategy can be to "maintain an informal atmosphere in order to establish more camaraderie with [the communicative] partner" (Jucker et al., 2003: 1750). Furthermore, the speaker might want to indicate his or her personal attitude towards the topic or situation (ibid.: 1750).

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 276) describe the feature conveying the speaker's attitude as an "interpersonal element" which is inherent in the meaning of some general nouns, especially those referring to human beings (e.g. *idiot, fool, devil, dear*). These are often accompanied by an attitudinal modifier (e.g. *the stupid thing, the lucky fellow*). In their study, Halliday and Hasan focus on the cohesive function of general nouns. This function is based on the fact that the general noun is "a borderline case between a lexical item (member of an open set) and grammatical noun (member of a closed system)". These nouns are in most cases accompanied by the definite article, which is anaphoric and thus causes the whole unit to have anaphoric reference (e.g. "Can you tell me where to stay in Geneva? I've never been to *the place*.") (ibid.: 274-5).

3.4 Discourse markers

Unlike the types of vague language devices discussed above, discourse markers such as *well, you know, I mean* are syntactically optional, as their omission does not change the meaning of the utterance (Quaglio, 2009: 80). Biber et al. define discourse markers as "inserts which tend to occur at the beginning of a turn or utterance, and to combine two roles:

1. to signal a transition in the evolving progress of the conversation
2. to signal an interactive relationship between speaker, hearer and message." (LGSWE: 1087)

The meaning of discourse markers is often ambiguous. They frequently express the discourse marker function alongside an adverbial function (e.g. *now* and *well* are both circumstance adverbs as well as discourse markers) (ibid.: 1086). In their discourse marker

function, adverbial expressions are interactive and cohesive (ibid.: 1077). According to Jucker and Smith (1998: 172)[7], there are two categories of discourse markers: reception markers and presentation markers. The first can be viewed as a sign of reception of the information by the hearer (e.g. *yeah*, *okay*), the latter appear alongside the information in the message and modify it (e.g. *you know*, *I mean*).

Discourse markers function as boundaries between two topics in speech; they indicate an opening, an end or a change of a topic (Carter and McCarthy, 2006)[8]. There is an interesting incidence of more types of vague expressions collocating - e.g. *you know* often collocates with the hedges *kind of* and *sort of*, which suggests that they have a similar discourse function, contributing to the vague character of the conversation (Aijmer, 1984)[9].

3.5 Stance markers

Stance markers differ from the vague language devices discussed so far in that they add to a statement a level of personal feelings or an assessment of a situation (Quaglio, 2009: 82). Similarly to discourse markers, the meaning of stance markers is ambiguous in certain cases. In the sentence *I hope there's enough there*, the verb *hope* conveys both epistemic stance (lack of certainty) and personal attitude (LGSWE: 972).

There are three groups of stance markers, namely attitudinal stance markers (e.g. *fortunately*, *interestingly*), style of speaking stance markers (e.g. *honestly*, *to tell you the truth*) and epistemic stance markers. In the study of vague language, especially the last group is important. Epistemic stance markers "can mark certainty (or doubt), actuality, precision, or limitation, or they can indicate the source of knowledge or the perspective from which the

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[7] Jucker, A. H. and S. W. Smith (1998) ˈAnd people just you know like 'wow': Discourse Markers as Negotiating Strategiesˈ, in A. H. Jucker and Z. Yael (eds.) *Discourse markers: Descriptions and theory*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Cited in Quaglio, 2009: 80.

[8] Carter, R. and M. McCarthy (2006) *Cambridge grammar of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cited in Quaglio, 2009: 80.

[9] Aijmer, K. (1984) ˈ*Sort of* and *kind of* in English conversationˈ. *Studia Linguistica* 38. Cited in Quaglio, 2009: 80.

information is given" (ibid.: 972). They are words such as *possibly* (marking doubt), *generally* (limitation) and *actually* (actuality). Epistemic stance markers may be used to soften a suggestion, express uncertainty (e.g. *perhaps*), lack of commitment or emphasis (e.g. *definitely*) (Quaglio, 2009: 82).

3.6 Coordination tags

Owing to relatively little terminological consensus on this particular class of vague lexical items, coordination tags can be found under various names. Channel (1994: 119) calls them 'vague category identifiers' due to their categorizing function. Expressions such as *or something*, *and stuff*, *or so* belong in this category. They "cue the listener to interpret the preceding element as an illustrative example of some more general case" (Dines, 1980: 22)[10]. "[T]he whole expression directs the hearer to access a set, of which the given item is a member whose characteristics will enable the hearer to identify the set (Channel, 1994: 122).

The sets, or categories, to which the coordination tags refer, can be best viewed as groups of certain things that share similar characteristics. Some of the categories have names (e.g. bird, furniture), some are groups without a single term designated to them (e.g. the 'class of movable items one buys when moving into a new house') (ibid.: 123). The function of this group of lexical items is viewed in a slightly different way in LGSWE. The term 'coordination tags', was chosen due to the fact that the coordinated constituents "are characteristically related both in form and meaning. This is presumably why it makes sense to choose a structure of coordination" (LGSWE: 115).

3.7 Approximating adverbs

The class of approximating adverbs includes expressions such as *about*, *around* and *like.* They are used to indicate 'imprecision of quantity' (Jucker, 2003: 1758), and therefore they usually appear before a numerical expression. Approximating adverbs are "purposely and

[10] Dines, E. (1980) 'Variation in discourse—and " stuff like that"'. *Language in Society* 9. Cited in Channel, 1994: 121.

unabashedly vague" (Sadock, 1977: 434)[11]. That is, the speaker is aware of the vagueness and deliberately chooses it. Apart from the lack of knowledge of the exact quantity, this strategy can have other reasons: "[r]emaining vague about a certain quantity enables [the speaker] to maintain fluency while remaining less committed towards the correctness of the number stated. Or the speaker might deliberately remain vague if the exact data would not present any relevant extra information for the hearer. Thus, vague language devices can help to make conversational contributions more economical, and hence more relevant" (Jucker, 2003: 1761).

"[N]umber approximators are understood to designate intervals of numbers", the length of the interval depending on the size of the number. Large numbers tend to have much bigger intervals in approximation than small numbers (Channel, 1994: 44). Expressions with round numbers, and those involving measurements of age, duration and time, are 'inherently approximators', including a literal and a loose meaning at the same time (Wachtel, 1980: 204)[12]. Some approximators do not indicate a symmetrical interval around the stated number; they inherently tend to point upwards or downwards. These are the 'partial specifiers' (Wachtel, 1981)[13], which include expressions such as *almost, less, at least, more than, over.*

3.8 Quantifiers

The last group of vague language devices comprises determiners specifying nouns in terms of quantity (LGSWE: 275). Channel (1994: 96) divides them into three groups: quantifiers positive for quantity (e.g. *lots of*), quantifiers negative for quantity (e.g. *few*) and quantifiers neutral for quantity (e.g. *some*). In LGSWE (275-6), the classification is somewhat different, with four main groups: inclusive (e.g. *all*, *both*, *every*), large quantity (e.g. *many*, *much*, *lots of*), moderate or small quantity (e.g. *some*, *little*, *few*) and arbitrary/negative member or amount (e.g. *any*, *either*, *neither*).

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[11] Sadock, J. M. (1977) 'Truth and approximations'. *Berkeley Linguistic Society Papers* 3. Cited in Jucker, 2003: 1738.

[12] Wachtel, T. (1980) 'Pragmatic approximations'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 4. Cited in Channel, 1994: 78.

[13] Wachtel, T. (1981) 'Distinguishing between approximations'. *Journal o f Pragmatics* 5. Cited in Channel, 1994: 62.

The interpretation of many of the quantifiers, especially plural quantifying expressions, depends largely on context and on a personal assessment of the situation - what is ‘a lot of _’ for one person can be not very much for another. These quantifiers "only convey information about the proportion of the full set of items which is intended" (Channel, 1994: 99) In this case, a vague expression can be more informative than an exact one, as e.g. *Most of the students passed the exam.* gives a much better overview of the situation than *22 students passed the exam.*, when we are interested in the overall success of the students (Jucker, 2003: 1751). On the other hand, particular words are quite weak as quantifiers, because they cannot express anything absolute about the quantities they are describing (e.g. *all schools* could mean twelve, or twelve thousand, depending on the context) (Channel, 1994: 99).

In verbal exchange, quantifiers can serve several purposes. They can work as an expression of the speaker's assumption in a way which cannot be expressed by precise numbers, as in the example above. They can also function as focusing devices, directing the listener's attention to different aspects of the situation. In the case of neutral quantifiers, such as *some,* the speaker may want to show that the number is not especially high or low, or that it is not relevant for the situation (Jucker, 2003: 1751-4).

4 Language in university lectures

4.1 Language in university lectures: Introduction

4.1.1 Definition of register

Biber (2006: 12) explains register as a "cover term for for any language variety defined in terms of a particular constellation of situational characteristics." This includes a wide variety of non-linguistic circumstances which the utterance depends on, such as the topic, the speaker's purpose, the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, and the conditions in which the utterance occurs. The terminology of individual registers is problematic; some of the more general types often have a name assigned within a culture (e.g. *novels, book reviews, sermons, lectures*), but this is not the case with the more specialized registers. Moreover, the texts within the assigned registers show a great variation in their linguistic characteristics, as those are dependent on the situational circumstances. Generally, the more specialized a certain register is, the more linguistic characteristics it shares with the other texts of the same register (ibid.: 12).

4.1.2 Spoken vs. written use of university language

Despite being an essential part of the everyday life for students, university language is not a widely researched area (ibid.: 1). From the research that has been carried out, however, one thing is apparent: even though academic lectures and textbooks on the same topic might be expected to share certain linguistic features since they are similar in their overall topics and purposes, this is in most cases not true. The language of textbooks takes full advantage of various grammatical means such as complex syntax and wide vocabulary; it is generally "carefully crafted and edited, resulting in a formal, 'academic' style" (ibid.: 2). The register of classroom lectures, on the other hand, shares more characteristic of conversation than those of academic writing (ibid.: 3). These features include engaging the audience by asking questions, checking if the students do not have any problems following the lecture (e.g. asking *ok?*), using some non-generic deictic pronouns, such as *I, we* and *you*.

Another feature of the register of university lectures as compared with textbooks is the occasional tendency to express the speaker's personal attitudes and thought processes, accompanied by mental verbs (e.g. *think, know*), stance adverbials (e.g. *really, a lot*), and modal and semi-modal verbs (e.g. *can, be going to*). The authors of university textbooks do

not usually express their own opinions and thoughts and rarely refer to the student or the author directly (ibid.: 4-5).

The main reason for the difference between the register of spoken academic lectures and that of textbooks is the fact that during the lecture, the instructor is forced to think and produce the utterance at the same time, without being given much space to plan the structure of the sentence and reformulate it if necessary. This results in frequent use of 'false starts', repetitions, pauses, and the use of vague language devices such as discourse markers (ibid.: 4). The authors of textbooks carefully craft and plan their language before writing it down, and their version undergoes numerous editings and revisions before being published. Therefore none of the above described features of lecture discourse appear in textbooks.

Worth noting is the difference in the syntax of spoken and written academic discourse: whereas it is typical for textbooks to use complex phrasal syntax, the lecture register seems to favour clausal syntax. It is therefore quite frequent that textbooks employ 'weak' verbs, which do not carry much lexical meaning but work well in connecting "long and complex noun phrases with embedded prepositional phrases (e.g. the attitudes of the persons in charge of the internal control system)" (ibid.: 5).

Finally, when comparing the register of university lectures and that of textbooks, there is a striking difference in the vocabulary employed. The range of vocabulary of lectures is much smaller than that of textbooks, which is mostly due to the real-time production and presentation. An analysis in the T2K-SWAL Corpus showed that there were only 14,500 different words used in the analysed lectures, as compared to 27,000 different words employed in the textbooks (ibid.: 36). The higher diversity of vocabulary in textbooks has been attributed to the frequent use of specialized terms. Despite the fact that the use of high-frequency words is rather low in both registers, the situation is different with rare word types, which are employed in textbooks to a much larger extent. Many common words, on the other hand, appear in the lecture register with especially high frequencies (ibid.: 37).

4.2 Functions of lecture discourse

When thinking about the functions of the register of university lectures, a question may arise to what extent they are universal for lectures in different corpora. Despite the dissimilarity of various fields of study, "there is probably a fair amount of common ground,

even if different conceptions of lectures and their consequent delivery may mean that certain functions are more or less prominent" (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 2). Lectures serve three main purposes: they transmit knowledge, facilitate learning by explication of the topics and raising the listeners' interest, and help socialize the students in their academic and professional communities (ibid.: 4). Keeping these three chief purposes of academic lectures in mind, Deroey and Taverniers enumerate lecture functions with their respective subfunctions: informing (describing, recounting, reporting, interpreting, demonstrating), elaborating (exemplifying, reformulating), evaluating (indicating attitude, indicating degree of commitment), organizing discourse (orientating, structuring, relating), interacting (regulating interaction, involving the audience, establishing a relationship with the audience) and managing the class (managing organizational matters, managing delivery, managing the audience) (ibid.: 5).[14]

4.2.1 Informing

The main aim of lectures is giving students the information necessary for them to improve their knowledge and skills in their own discipline. The first subfunction of informing, description, is characterized by the preoccupations of the individual disciplines, therefore lectures in the field of arts and humanities and social sciences generally include more descriptions of people and theories than those in the field of life and physical sciences. The describing subfunction is usually connected with the use of present tenses:

> (1) Thomas Hobbes the extremely influential English moral and political philosopher who wrote the great book The Leviathan (ahlct035) (ibid.: 6)

The recounting subfunction, on the other hand, often involves past tenses and time indications due to the 'historical context' (Biber 2006a: 116)[15] that the lecturer provides.

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[14] The classification and description of the lecture functions and subfunctions are based on Deroey and Taverniers' qualitative analysis of lectures from the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) Corpus and findings from previous research (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 1). With regard to the topic of this thesis, we will be describing only features appearing in arts and humanities lectures.

[15] Biber, D. (2006a) *University language: a corpus-based study of spoken and written registers*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 2.

Recounting has a strong representation in arts and humanities lectures, as historical context is especially important in these fields of study (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 8). Reporting somebody's research and ideas is indispensable in university lectures, and forms a great part of what the lecturers say (ibid.: 6). "Pedagogic discourse is a principle for appropriating other discourses and bringing them into special relations with each other for the purposes of their selective transmission and acquisition" (Bernstein, 1990: 183-4)[16]. 'Reporting signals' (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 7) usually include a communication verb (e.g. *say*) and the source (e.g. the name of the author). The reports in arts and humanities and social sciences lectures usually make reports of words or ideas and terms, or support an interpretation (ibid.: 7):

> (2) Searle starts off by observing that we seem to have available to us two different ways of being able to explain human behavior (ahlct035) (ibid.: 7)

The interpretative subfunction of informing provides a cue to the students as to the significance of something in the lecture. Sometimes the interpretation can be signalled lexically (e.g. *suggest*), but in most cases, it is identified by the context:

> (3) what this narrator is illustrating asking you to notice is that she is saying this is what childhood is while at the same time saying none of us can remember it (ahlct009) (ibid.: 7)

The last subfunction of the informing function of lectures, demonstrating, is not particularly important in arts and humanities lectures, as it includes mostly practical application of particular methods or equations (ibid.: 8).

4.2.2 Elaborating

To help the students understand the lecture precisely, the informing lecture function is accompanied by elaborating, which reflects the speaker's assessment of the instructional message (ibid. 8). Moreover, elaborating can be viewed as a form of interaction between the lecturer and the students (Hyland, 2007)[17]. Exemplification, the first subfunction of

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[16] Bernstein, B. (1990) *The structuring of pedagogic discourse. Vol. IV: class, codes and control*. London: Routledge. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 6.

[17] Hyland, K. (2007) ˈApplying a gloss: exemplifying and reformulating in academic discourseˈ. *Applied Linguistics* 28. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 8.

elaborating, can be introduced by overt lexical cues (e.g. *example* and *for instance*) or by "potentially ambiguous cues such as discourse markers (e.g. *you know*)":

(4) somebody who's doing something absolutely bizarre you know they're standing on one leg like this (ahlct035) (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 9)

Naming examples contributes to a better understanding of the topic and enlivens the lecture. Similarly to exemplification, reformulating can be introduced by explicit clues (e.g. *I mean*). However, this is usually not the case, as it is easy to deduce in the given situation as repetition, the disciplinary knowledge of the students or the relationship between the lexical items are sufficient clues (ibid.: 9):

(5) the next thing he has to establish is the necessary animus the necessary intention (sslct016) (ibid.: 9)

4.2.3 Organizing discourse

An indispensable skill of a lecturer is being able to organize the lecture into a coherent whole, as this helps him or her guide the students through the mass of information presented. "The function of lectures is to instruct, by presenting information in such a way that a coherent body of information is presented, readily understood, and remembered" (Chaudron and Richards, 1986: 14)[18]. Discourse organization helps the speaker signal what points he or she is going to cover and when the topic is going to shift. Moreover, it serves as an indicator of how particular points in the lecture are related to each other as regarding time or importance (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 10). The first subcategory of discourse organization helps shift the listeners' focus to the upcoming topic:

(6) i want to give you er an understanding of the immunological basis of graft rejection (lslct011) (ibid.:10)

Secondly, the speaker can use linguistic tools to structure the unfolding speech:

(7) what i'd like to do now is turn to how you actually make the things (pslct003) (ibid.: 10)

[18] Chaudron, C. and J. C. Richards (1986) 'The effect of discourse markers on the comprehension of lectures'. *Applied Linguistics* 7. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 10.

Finally, relation frame between the individual points of the discourse can be provided:

(8) we're going to come back to waves again (pslct027) (ibid.:10)

There is a great variety of linguistic realization of discourse organizing tools, differing in the level of explicitness and interactivity. Some of the less explicit signals include content-oriented questions and discourse markers (e.g. *so*); the level of interactivity depends on whether the cues refer to the speaker or the listeners, and on some personal aspects expressed in the speech of the lecturer (the use of *I* and verbs expressing volition, intention or desire) (ibid.: 11).

4.2.4 Evaluating

Thompson and Hunston (2000)[19] define evaluation as "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about", which corresponds to Biber's 'stance' (1999)[20]. It is not easy to identify evaluation and it often depends on the context (Mauranen, 2004)[21], as many non-linguistic cues are important in the signalling of evaluation as well (Biber, 2006a)[22]. Biber (ibid.)[23] distinguishes two types of evaluation: attitudinal and epistemic. The first reflects the speaker's personal feelings (*complaint*, *literal*), the second his or her commitment to the statement (*tend to*, *totally*):

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[19] Thompson, G. and S. Hunston (2000) 'Evaluation: an introduction', in S. Hunston and G. Thompson (eds.) *Evaluation in text: authorial stance and the construction of discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 11.

[20] Biber, D., S. Johansson, G. Leech, S. Conrad and E. Finegan (1999) *Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. Harlow: Longman. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 11.

[21] Mauranen, A. (2004) 'Where next? A summary of the round table discussion', in Del Lungo Camiciotti, G. and E. Tognini Bonelli, E. (eds.) *Academic discourse-new insights into evaluation*. Bern: Peter Lang. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 11.

[22] Biber, D. (2006a) *University language: a corpus-based study of spoken and written registers*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 11-12.

[23] Ibid. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 12.

(9) my complaint about Braund and about Van Arsdell though is that they tend to be totally literal (ahlct006) (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 12)

The reflection of the lecturer's opinion and commitment to the discourse can help guide the students in the interpretation of what is being said (ibid.: 87)[24], and it can improve their skills in critical thinking (Young, 1994: 172-173)[25].

4.2.5 Interacting

This discourse function has a special pedagogical importance, as it helps the lecturer establish an atmosphere which helps the students learn. Verbal interaction between teacher and student during a lecture is rare, usually regulated by the lecturer to check the comprehension of the audience, manage the class or involve the class in text production (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 14):

(10) Lecturer: is the is er microphone on

Student: no (ahlct035) (ibid.: 14)

A more frequent method for creating the sense of audience involvement is the choice of content and vocabulary, with an emphasis on linguistic devices signalling the inclusion of the listeners, for instance references to their own experiences (Fortanet, 2004b)[26]:

(11) there's enormous variation in the form of social movements those of you who might be members of a trade union or a political party […] will know that they can take an extremely bureaucratic form (sslct031) (Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 14)

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[24] Ibid. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 12.

[25] Young, L. (1994) 'University lectures – macro-structure and micro-features', in J. Flowerdew (ed.) *Academic listening: research perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 12.

[26] Fortanet, I. (2004b) 'Enhancing the speaker-audience relationship in academic Lectures', in P. Garcés Conejos, R. Gómez Morón, L. Fernández Amaya and M. Padilla Cruz (eds.) *Current Trends in Intercultural, Cognitive and Social Pragmatics*. Seville: Editorial Kronos. Cited in Deroey & Taverniers, 2011: 14.

The interacting function of lectures can reduce or increase the distance between the lecturer and the students and it can help provide breaks in the presentation of difficult or monotonous topics (ibid.: 15).

4.2.6 Managing the class

Most manifestations of this function appear at the beginning of the lectures, since it includes mostly ensuring that the students have the materials and the information necessary for attending the class (e.g. timetables, assessment guidelines):

> (12) these lecture notes will go up onto the web er within the very next few days (lslct011) (ibid.: 16)

Apart from this, teachers need to pay attention to the management of time, lecture delivery, and the physical environment, which is often accompanied by commentaries of their actions (e.g. *write, stop*), the use of interjections and expressions used to evaluate problems (e.g. *oh sorry, I'm afraid*) (ibid.: 16). The usual instances of managing the class are directing the students' attention and activity towards the lecturer's goals, e.g. to take notes, be quiet or interact with the speaker (ibid.: 17).

5 Material and methods

The present work examines a series of extracts from lectures recorded in the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus. The BASE corpus comprises a collection of transcripts of lectures and seminars recorded the Universities of Warwick and Reading in the UK between 1998 and 2005. "It consists of 160 lectures and 39 seminars recorded in a variety of university departments. Holdings are distributed across four broad disciplinary groups, each represented by 40 lectures and 10 seminars. These groups are:

- Arts and Humanities
- Life and Medical Sciences
- Physical Sciences
- Social Studies and Sciences."[27]

The corpus is part-of-speech tagged.

For the purposes of the present study, a sub-corpus of lectures from the field of Arts and Humanities has been created, with each of the lectures distinguished by its file name. "File names are made up of five letters and three digits, in which the first two letters indicate the disciplinary group, the next three indicate that the file is a transcript of a lecture, and the digits are unique identifiers."[28] The Arts and Humanities lectures therefore share the description *ahlct*, which is followed by an identifier of the lecture, e.g. ahlct029 (i.e. an Arts and Humanities lecture The Annales: Braudel and beyond). Detailed information on the lectures is available in the *BASE Corpus Holdings Spreadsheet*.[29] The corpus was accessed using

[27]http://www.coventry.ac.uk/Global/05%20Research%20section%20assets/Research/British%20Academic%20Spoken%20English%20(BASE)/base_manual.pdf

[28]http://www.coventry.ac.uk/Global/05%20Research%20section%20assets/Research/British%20Academic%20Spoken%20English%20(BASE)/base_manual.pdf

[29] http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research-bank/research-archive/art-design/british-academic-spoken-english-corpus-base/contents/

the *Sketch Engine* open access interface.[30] The transcripts of the lectures analysed in detail in Section 6 were downloaded from

http://www.reading.ac.uk/AcaDepts/ll/base_corpus/ah/index.htm.

In the research, two complementary approaches were adopted:

a) Bottom-up text analysis: excerpts from six lectures were chosen (two from the initial, two from the medial and two from the final parts), each consisting of 2000 words. All of the instances of vague language devices were excerpted and classified.

b) Corpus-supported analysis: this section adopts a global view with all of the lectures from the Arts and Humanities sub-corpus examined. Based on the results from the analysis in a), we examined the most frequent nouns, pronouns and adverbs, describing their collocations and focussing on recurrent patterns associated with vagueness.

[30] https://the.sketchengine.co.uk/bonito/run.cgi/first_form?corpname=preloaded/base;

6 Bottom-up text analysis

6.1 Bottom-up text analysis: Introduction

In the following section of the thesis, we will examine the actual use of vague language devices. For this purpose, excerpts from six lectures have been chosen. To examine whether there is any connection between the part of the lecture and the frequency of vague expressions used, we have chosen excerpts from different parts of the lectures - 2000 words from the initial section of two lectures, 2000 words from the middle section of two lectures and 2000 words from the final section of two lectures. The whole analysed transcripts of the excerpts can be found in the appendix. The aim of the analysis is to identify vague language devices, to classify them, and to discover the quantity of the individual types of vague expressions in the samples. Furthermore, we will try to discover whether they often occur together and which types do. We will also describe the most frequent reasons for the use of the individual groups of vague language devices.

6.2 Distribution of vague language devices

In the six excerpts, there were 634 vague expressions found. The individual occurrences of some of the vague language devices have been assigned to different classes, depending on the function they have (e.g. *whatever* is categorized under general pronouns and coordination tags; its meaning as a general pronoun is *the thing that*, as a coordination tag it is used to categorize the referent). The order of vague language devices in the six excerpts according to frequency is: hedges (181), discourse markers (113), quantifiers (104), stance markers (86), general nouns (51), general pronouns (33), modal verbs (26), coordination tags (22), general verbs (15), approximating adverbs (3).

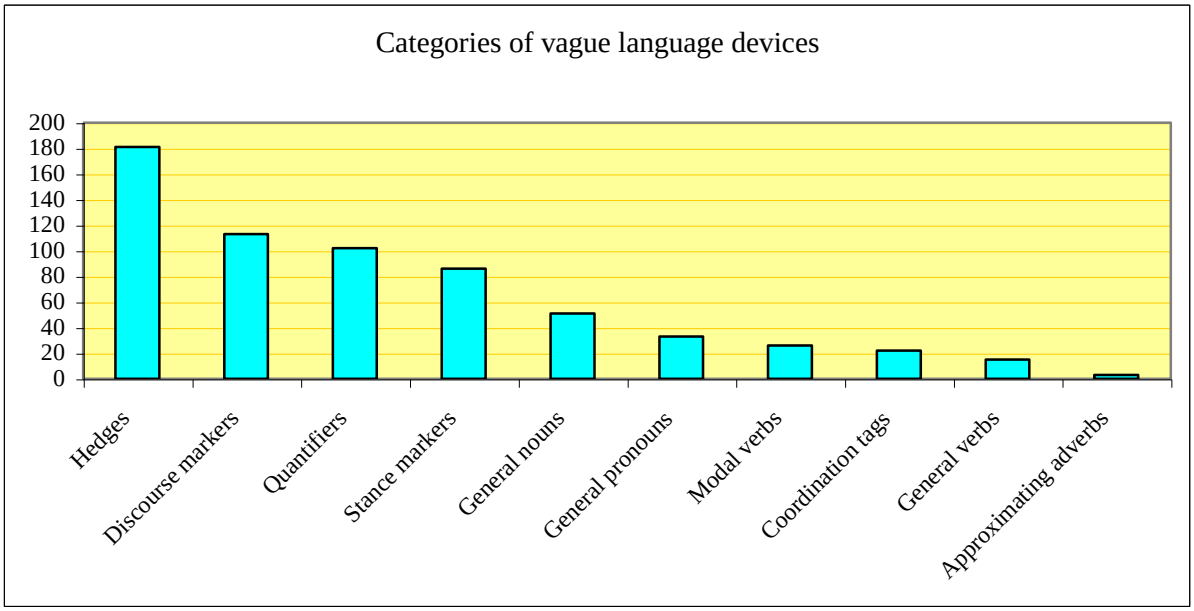

Figure 1: Vague language devices: representation in six lecture extracts

6.2.1 Hedges

Hedges are the most frequent kind of vague expressions in the lectures examined. There are 181 occurrences, with a not particularly broad variety given their high frequency. The most frequent expression is *sort of* (88 occurrences), followed by *kind of* (58), *quite* (16), *rather* (8), *slightly* (2), *pretty* (2), *relatively* (2), *slight* (1), *like* (1), *more or less* (1), *I would* (1), *fairly* (1).

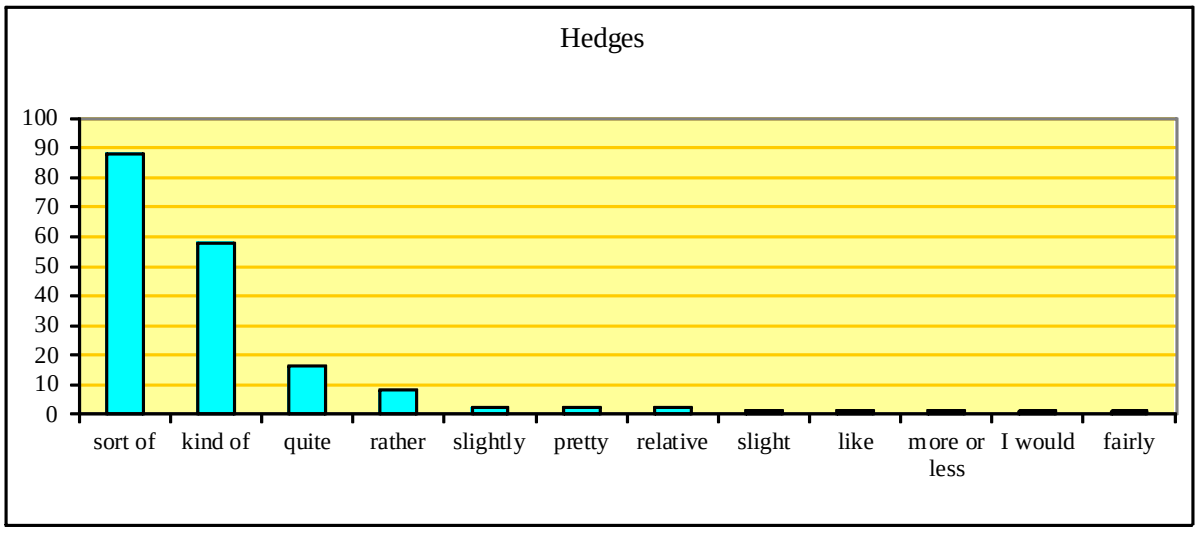

Figure 2: Hedges: representation in six lecture extracts

Throughout the six lectures, it is apparent that hedges are used especially to signal that the speaker is not completely sure about the phrasing (ex. 1) or that that the following formulation

is only an approximation of the speaker's thoughts (ex. 2). In other cases, the lecturer is trying to gain some time and uses a hedge to fill the pause, which is often accompanied by hesitation (ex. 3). There are also some cases of the use of hedges in order to make the exchange less direct and more polite (ex. 4), especially when regulating interaction with the students. Finally, hedges can be used to make the speech sound more natural and less formal. This is reinforced by the use of other vague language devices as well (e.g. *a few*, *you know* and reiteration of *kind of* in ex. 5). The highest frequency of hedges is in the excerpts from the final sections of lectures (87). In the last lecture, it is evident that hedges and other vague expressions are especially concentrated at the very end (see Appendix). A possible interpretation of this phenomenon is that the speaker was pressed for time, therefore chose vague expressions at the expense of precise formulations. Another reason could be connected with the evaluating function of the lecture, namely that the lecturer makes an assessment of the topic at the end of the lecture, and therefore he wants to let the students know that what he is saying is only his opinion. This is reinforced by the frequent use of stance markers in the final sections of lectures.

(1) it is fourthly avowedly and very **sort of** magnificently interdisciplinary (line 88, ahlct029)

(2) anything could happen there's a **kind of** unexpected er things er happening (105, ahlct014)

(3) very excessive i think **sort of** shots of er er of of that woman in pain (138, ahlct014)

(4) so **i would** just turn up and it's in er library training room (22, ahlct029)

(5) War is **kind of** dealt with in a few pages and including you know people **kind of**

dying on battlefields (68-69, ahlct013)

6.2.2 General nouns

The group of general nouns represented in the six lectures is not very large, 51 occurrences. Similarly to hedges, there is no great variety of general nouns in the lectures, the vast majority being represented by the word *thing(s)* (41). The other nouns are *stuff* (4), *place* (3), *locations* (1), *works* (1) and *objects* (1).

Most of the general nouns in the lecture are used to make the speech production faster and easier. This applies especially when it is not necessary to express the subject referred to in

exact terms, as it is not essential for the discourse and the listeners can easily supply the potential meaning in their imagination (ex. 6). Some of the general nouns are used when the speaker obviously cannot call the exact term to mind. In these instances, general nouns are often accompanied by hesitations and other vague language devices (ex. 7). In other cases, the speaker possibly wants to establish an informal atmosphere by using colloquial vague expressions (including the general noun *stuff*). There are often more of them, reinforcing each other's function (e.g. the colloquial intensifier *pretty* in ex. 8). From all the groups of vague expressions, general nouns are most often accompanied by quantifiers, which signals that the noun should be taken as a general example of a more specific phenomenon. In this respect, they are similar to coordination tags, within the frame of which they also often occur (ex. 9). Most of the general nouns occur in the excerpts from the initial (25) and final (21) parts of lectures, probably because the language tends to be less formal and more interactive during the introduction to the topic and in the conclusion (cf. the discourse-organizing, class-managing and interacting functions of the lecture) than in the middle sections (ex. 10).

(6) Mr and Mrs Smith who are sort of discussing **things** (42-43, ahlct017)

(7) i've sort of given some of the er **things** here er very si-, very simplistically (10, ahlct020)

(8) this is pretty absurd **stuff** (58-59, ahlct017)

(9) introductory material and er glossaries and notes and all this kind of **stuff** (96-97, ahlct037)

(10) i'm going to say a few **things** about Hume and a few **things** about the Treatise (7-8, ahlct037)

6.2.3 General pronouns[31]

In the six excerpts, there is a significant number of occurrences of pronouns with a function similar to general nouns, therefore it seems appropriate to mention them. There are 33 occurrences of general pronouns in the 6 lecture extracts: *something* (14), *this* (7), *what* (6), *someone* (1), *somebody else* (1), *anything* (1), *everything else* (1), *all that* (1), *whatever* (1).

[31] The category of general pronouns is not described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

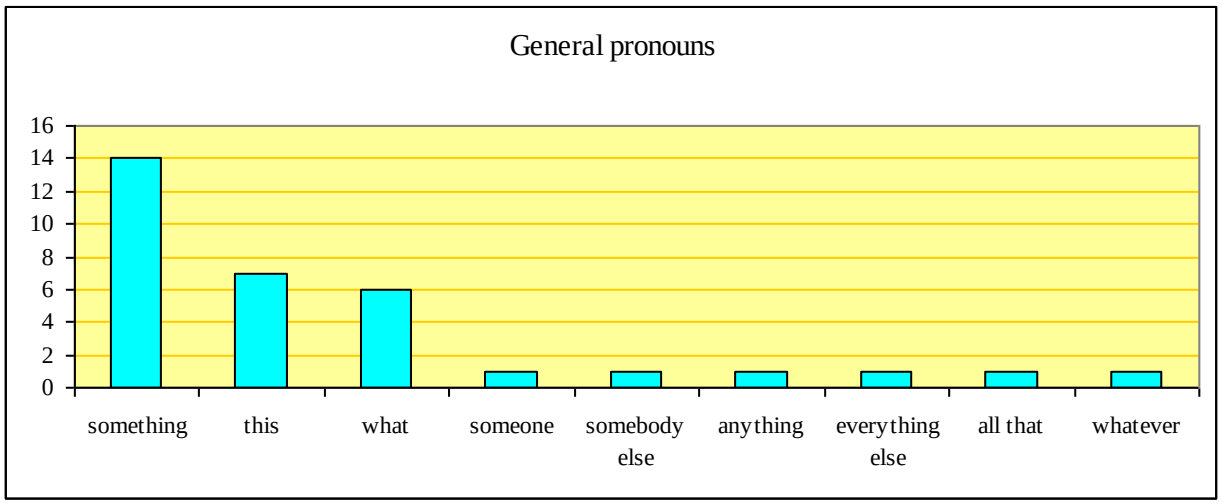

Figure 3: General pronouns: representation in six lecture extracts

Similarly to general nouns, general pronouns comprise a number of potential meanings. However, they seem to be vaguer than general nouns, since it is more difficult to supply their meaning. Sometimes it seems that even the speaker does not have a clear idea of what he means (ex. 11). In other cases, however, a general pronoun is used because a precise formulation is not necessary and the listeners can supply the meaning themselves (ex. 12). Similarly to general nouns, general pronouns are used when the speaker wants to speed up the speech production (ex. 13, the reference of the demonstratives is not clear form the context, it is vague rather than ambiguous). In the six excerpts from the lectures, general pronouns tend to be quite isolated from the other vague language devices, with no significant co-occurrences with any of the other groups. There is an approximately equal representation of general pronouns in all the parts of the lectures.

(11) on the other hand it reveals **something** about our sort of inner selves doesn't it (69, ahlct017)

(12) as accurate a picture as possible or you know my interpretation of events as opposed to **somebody else's** interpretation of events (122-123, ahlct013)

(13) okay so Newton gave us **this** er when somebody starts writing **this** down (74-75, ahlct037)

6.2.4 General verbs[32]

Just like general nouns and pronouns, general verbs comprise a number of potential meanings. From the 15 occurrences in the lectures, 14 are forms of the verb *do*; the one

[32] The category of general verbs is not described in the theoretical part of the thesis.

exception is the verb *make*. In all the instances, it seems that the general verbs are used to make the speech production faster, when precise formulations are unnecessary and easily deducible from the context (ex. 14). Several of the general verbs were accompanied by quantifiers and general nouns, all of them having the function of making the speech production faster, reinforcing the vagueness of the whole utterance (ex. 15). The majority of general verbs occur in the excerpts from the initial sections of lectures (9), especially when the lecturers are interacting with the students (ex. 16).

(14) and if you're **doing** the Annales you **do** Braudel you know about this (57-58, ahlct029)

(15) Jean-Louis Barrault **did** all sorts of interesting things (82, ahlct017)

(16) you might want to think about Searle that you **did** last year (58, ahlct037)

6.2.5 Discourse markers

Discourse markers are the second largest group of vague expressions found in the lectures. There are 113 of them found in the texts. The most frequent discourse marker in the lectures is *you know* (43), followed by *I mean* (33), *basically* (17), *if you like* (9), *really* (9), *if you want* (1), *so* (1). There are only presentation markers in the lectures, as only the lecturers speak.

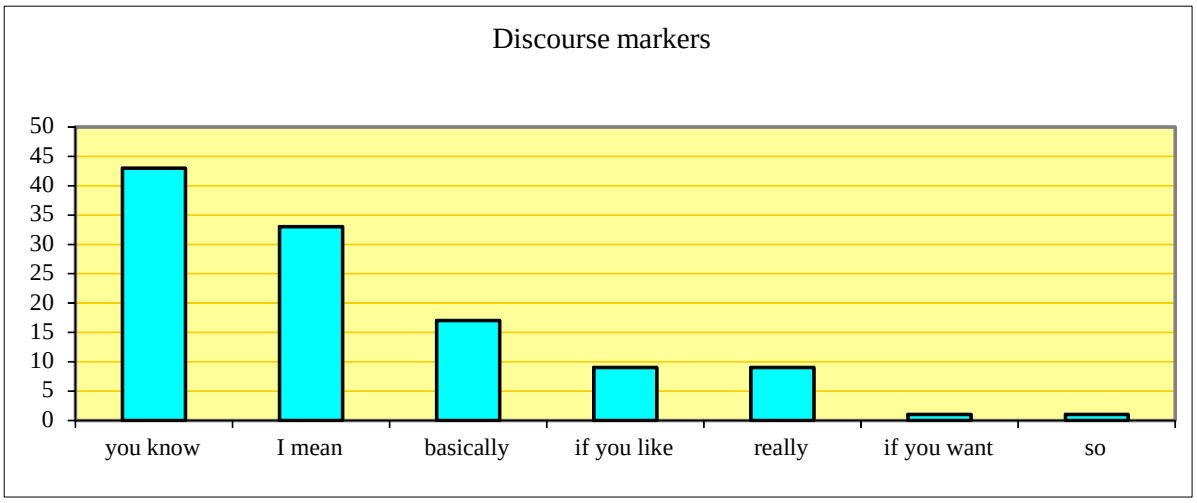

Figure 4: Discourse markers: representation in six lecture extracts

It seems that vague discourse markers have several functions at once: they can serve to gain time to think of the precise expressions following them. Some of them also make the

discourse more fluent and natural. Judging by the fact that *you know* is the most frequent discourse marker, it could be safely said that there is a significant interactive function. By using this vague language device, the speaker makes it appear as though he is addressing the listeners personally, and thus establishes a more personal relationship with them (ex. 17). Discourse markers are frequently employed when the speaker is uncertain about the formulations, and therefore uses filler words to gain time to think. This endeavour is often insufficient, as the following words are vague as well (ex. 18). Lastly, the speaker often addresses the shared knowledge of the group, inviting the hearers to supply the meaning or correct it in their minds if it is imprecise (ex. 19)[33]. Discourse markers do not have a significant co-occurrence with another group of vague language devices. The highest frequency of discourse markers is in the final (51) and initial (46) sections of lectures. This could again be attributed to the less formal atmosphere of the introduction and the conclusion of the lecture, where there is a much higher degree of interaction with the students.

(17) Docherty counts for nothing er but youth in a suit **you know** that's the future that's the future of er hospital management (22-23, ahlct014)

(18) argued before history had been obsessed with before **you know** ministries and er kings and all the rest of it it (73, ahlct029)

(19) there appears a work which would be the flagship **if you like** of the Annales (45-46, ahlct029)

6.2.6 Stance markers

Stance markers are the fourth most frequent type of vague expressions in the lectures examined (86) and the most variable one. *I think* is the most frequent stance marker (38), followed by *actually* (12), *perhaps* (9), *probably* (7), *generally speaking* (3), *hopefully* (2), *possibly* (2), *generally* (2), *I'm told* (1), *I wonder* (1), *I would think* (1), *I'm not sure* (1), *I suppose* (1), *broadly speaking* (1), *I do think* (1), *arguably* (1), *I don't suppose* (1), *I would say* (1), *don't know* (1).

[33] As pointed out by Quaglio (2009: 81), the discourse marker *I mean* indicates "the speaker's awareness of the vagueness of his/her own utterance. In this sense, I mean does not contribute to the vagueness of the utterance; rather it reflects the vagueness of the chunk of utterance preceding it." E.g. *you can't miss it er it's quite interesting that sequence because i mean it's it's very very extended er and very very excessive.*

The function of the vague epistemic stance markers found in the six excerpts is to express the degree of certainty or lack of commitment of the speaker (ex. 20-22). Thus stance markers are not necessarily vague themselves but serve as indicators of the speakers' awareness of the vagueness of what they are saying. Stance markers often appear in close proximity to each other, reinforcing the message that what the speaker says is only his opinion and should not be taken as a given fact. Again, this message is often intensified by the use of other vague expressions, such as hedges and general nouns (ex. 23). The highest frequency of stance markers appear in the excerpts from the final sections of lectures (45), which is probably due to the fact that the lecturers evaluate the topic and add their own conclusions.

(20) **i think** it does sort of repay quite c-, quite careful attention (113, ahlct017)

(21) er **broadly speaking** this a classic work (57, ahlct029)

(22) another group er Robespierre is **perhaps** the most prominent and certainly the

most articulate of them (84-85, ahlct020)

(23) **i would say perhaps** just as a kind of er as as a kind of final thing (69-70, ahlct017)

6.2.7 Modal verbs

Modal verbs have a similar function as stance markers, therefore it seems appropriate to mention them. We will include only epistemic modal verbs, as only they convey vague meaning. There are 26 of them in the six lectures, the most frequent one being *might* (16), followed by *may* (6) and *could* (4).

Epistemic modal verbs are used to express the degree of certainty (ex. 24). Apart from that, the lecturers often use them to soften a suggestion (ex. 25). The highest frequency of modal verbs is in the excerpts from the final sections of lectures (11). This could again be caused by the fact that the speaker evaluates the topic at the end of the lecture and adds his own thoughts, signalling that they are not to be taken as facts but only his opinions. There is no significant co-occurrence with another type of vague language devices.

(24) that new man which we talked about in seventeen-eighty-na nine **may** have been a new man of the age of liberty (86-87, ahlct020)

(25) i mean you **might** want to think about Searle that you did last year (58, ahlct037)

6.2.8 Coordination tags

Coordination tags are not very frequent in the lectures, with only 22 occurrences in the six excerpts. In the majority of the cases, they are introduced by the conjunction *and* or *or*. The most frequent coordination tag in the lectures is *or whatever* (5), followed by *and all the rest of it* (4), *and so on* (2), *or something* (2), *whatever* (2), *and things like that* (2), *and whatever* (1), *or elsewhere* (1), *or anything* (1), *and all this kind of stuff* (1), *and all sorts of things* (1).

All of the coordination tags in the excerpts are used to cue the listener to interpret the previous element as an illustrative example of a certain set of things (ex. 26). As it is apparent from some of the coordination tags listed above, they often comprise other types of vague language devices (especially general nouns and quantifiers). The highest number of coordination tags is in the initial parts of lectures (11), probably due to the less formal atmosphere at the beginning and due to the fact that the speaker has not yet established a fluent pace of the lecture.

(26) there aren't any more sort of troops **or anything** on French soil (67-68, ahlct020)

6.2.9 Approximating adverbs

The group of approximating adverbs has the fewest occurrences in the lecture excerpts (3).This could be attributed to the topics of the lectures, which do not deal with numbers to a great extent. The three adverbs are at least, around and about.

Approximating adverbs can be employed to indicate that the speaker does not know the exact number but knows that the interval around the stated number is quite small (ex. 27). Partial specifiers indicate an asymmetrical interval with the highest or lowest limit of the interval being the quantity named. They are chosen when the speaker does not know the exact number but knows the limit (ex. 28). Approximating adverbs are also used to indicate larger and very vague symmetrical intervals (ex. 29). The approximating adverbs found in the excerpts do not occur in a close proximity to any other vague language devices. They are all found in the samples from the middle parts of lectures.

(27) the manager's **about** eighteen years old (17-18, ahlct014)

(28) workings and connotations is an elaborately developed over at **at least** two pages (42-43, ahlct013)

(29) **around** the time that Virginia Woolf was writing Orlando (135, ahlct013)

6.2.10 Quantifiers

The last group of vague expressions examined, quantifiers, has a reasonably high occurrence in the six lectures - there are 104 of them, marking this group as the third largest of the vague expressions. The most frequent quantifier is *all* (21), followed by *some* (9), *a few* (8), *a lot of* (7), *the rest of* (7), *a couple of* (6), *much* (6), *some of* (5), *a number of* (5), *very much* (5), *most of* (4), *all of* (4), *any* (4), *a little bit* (3), *a lot* (3), *lot of* (2), *lots of* (1), *a little tiny tiny bit* (1), *bit* (1), *little* (1), *numerous* (1).

Quantifiers can be used to direct the listeners' attention to another topic than a number, which is unimportant in the given situation (ex. 30). In other cases, the quantifier is actually more informative than a number, giving the listeners an idea of proportion (ex. 31). Similarly to other vague language devices, some of the quantifiers contribute to the informal atmosphere of the lecture (ex. 32). Although quantifiers do not seem to favour a single other group of vague expressions, they, just like general nouns, often appear within the frame of coordination tags. The most frequent vague quantifier, *all*, tends to occur within the frame of a coordination tag or before a general noun, creating a very vague phrase (ex. 33). The highest number of quantifiers appears in the initial sections of lectures (44), again possibly owing to the less formal atmosphere of the introduction and the lack of fluency of speech at the beginning of the lecture.

(30) it was described by s-, by **some** people at the time as the longest love letter in the English language (17-19, ahlct013)

(31) so he takes on **a lot of** Locke's er **a lot of** the the terminology used by Locke and Berkeley and he looks at another **lot of** the same kind of problems (20-22, ahlct037)

(32) i mean having sort of given you **a little tiny tiny bit** of an overview (129-130, ahlct037)

(33) and of course it's that playfulness which allows Virginia Woolf to do **all** those things (22-23, ahlct013)

6.3 Bottom-up text analysis: Conclusion

The majority of vague language devices (270) occur in the excerpts from the final sections of lectures. There are 210 vague expressions in the initial sections and 154 in the middle

sections. The high frequency of vague language devices by the ends of lectures could be a signal that the lecturer realizes that he does not have much time left and therefore does not want to waste time recalling precise formulations. Moreover, the speakers make an evaluation of the topic at the end of the lecture, using many vague language devices expressing their own personal attitude and the degree of certainty. Many vague expressions are used at the very beginnings, before the actual lecture, where the teacher organizes the class and gives practical instructions. In this situation, the language is close to natural conversation, allowing the speaker to use informal expressions, which often have an interactive function, and many of which are vague. It is probably for this reason that the groups of vague expressions with an interactive function (discourse markers) and the groups speeding up speech production and expressing evaluation (hedges and stance markers) have a dramatically higher representation in the initial and final parts of lectures.

Vague language devices often occur in close proximity to each other, sometimes even within the frame of one expression. This is mainly the case of coordination tags (e.g. *and all this kind of stuff*). The close proximity of vague expressions could be attributed to their similar functions in certain situations, especially when the speaker is insecure, e.g. about phrasing, about the degree of truth of what he is saying, when he cannot remember some information or when he needs to gain more time to think. Another reason for the clustering of vague language devices is that the speaker is trying to establish an informal atmosphere and more interaction with the students.

7 Corpus-supported analysis

7.1 Corpus-supported analysis: Introduction

In the last section of the thesis, we will examine three word classes, which are the most frequent in the vague language devices described: nouns, adverbs and pronouns. In the previous part of the thesis, we have discovered that some of the words from these classes have an especially high representation in the lecture excerpts (e.g. *sort*, *kind*, *thing*, *okay*, *all*), which is presumably due to the high frequency of vague language devices in the lectures. We will search for the most frequent words in each word class, select the vague ones and examine their surroundings and functions. As described in the methodological section, the analysis is based on the Arts and Humanities lecture sub-corpus of the BASE corpus.

7.2 Nouns

The starting point of our analysis of common nouns in the Arts and Humanities sub-corpus of BASE is the frequency rank. Table 1 below lists the fifteen most frequent nouns in the sub-corpus. From these we have chosen the top five which have often vague meaning. They are *people*, *way*, *sort*, *kind* and *things*.

rank	noun	frequency
1	history	704
2	people	658
3	way	650
4	sort	617
5	kind	520
6	things	509
7	century	479
8	idea	454
9	time	451
10	sense	364
11	fact	341
12	thing	337
13	world	289
14	ideas	256
15	point	254

Table 1: Nouns: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities

The noun *people* (658 occurrences) is usually generic, with a very vague meaning. Most frequently, it is immediately preceded by a general adjective which functions as a

premodifier, e.g. *other* (26), *ordinary* (8), *real* (6). Despite their premodifying function, many of these adjectives are quite vague, denoting a large group of unspecific individuals (ex. 1).

rank	collocate	frequency	log likelihood
1	many	39	264.068
2	of	122	251.827
3	the	129	161.730
4	other	30	127.045
5	some	29	109.907
6	these	26	91.740
7	ordinary	9	87.432
8	most	16	76.922
9	which	24	54.978
10	that	50	54.544
11	and	55	52.735
12	by	18	47.538
13	lot	10	41.039
14	for	22	40.765
15	[[voiced pause]]	45	39.707

Table 2: The left collocates of *people* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood)

Apart from general adjectives and determiners, the word *people* in the corpus is most often preceded (within the scope L3-L1) by the quantifiers *many* (39), *some* (29), *most* (16) and by voiced pauses (45). (Table 2). The high frequency of the preposition *of* among the collocates, especially at L1 position, is partly connected with its use as a part of the non-specific quantifiers *a (greater) number of / (a) lot of / lots of / group(s) of / thousands of / plenty of / millions of people* (ex. 2). Again, it is apparent that the whole phrases have a vague meaning (ex. 3).

The frequent use of voiced pauses before the word might signify that the speaker is hesitant about the expression, trying to recall a more specific one. There are many pauses (22) among the elements preceding the words before the noun *people* as well, presumably because the speaker is hesitant about the whole phrase (ex. 4). The elements immediately following the noun *people* are mostly pronouns and prepositions. The most frequent one is *who* (70), followed by *in* (43) and *like* (39). These elements are almost exclusively the beginnings of a postmodification. The phrases are overall not as vague as the premodified ones but many of them still have a quite general meaning (ex. 5). The most frequent lexical verbs (lemmata) following *people* within the scope of two items are *be* (35, out of the total 98 occurrences of *be*), *have* (17, out of 57 occurrences of *have*), *go* (15), *say* (15), *think* (13), and *do* (10, out of

27 occurrences of *do*). These verbs tend to be quite general as well (ex. 6). The verbs are most frequently in the present simple tense forms, contributing further to the general (temporally unrestricted) nature of the statements (ex. 7 – cf. the combination of *people*, the atemporal present and the generic reference *you*). The noun *people* is often accompanied by a number of vague expressions, bolstering its vagueness.

(1) one thing that Dr McLeod didn't say but i heard **other people** talking about cognitivism say one thing he didn't say (ahlct035)

(2) and it ha has been suggested by **a number of people** that part of the whole purpose of the Agricola is actually to justify the survival of those members of the senate (ahlct 005)

(3) symbolism is a is a word i think that **many people** find fraught with perils and again it's a word that will often crop up in discussions of Renaissance poetry (ahlct010)

(4) the lecture is called Nineteenth Century Fiction and the Dream of Childhood now [[voiced pause]] **some people** might think oh you know it's a marginal lecture it's going to be on something quite unimportant (ahlct009)

(5) it may seem a bit strange to put conscience in my left hand column here for **people like** Thoreau (ahlct008)

(6) a whole sort of set of welfare provision [[voiced pause]] within this [[voiced pause]] period [[voiced pause]] so that **people have** something to fight for (ahlct020)

(7) it's one of those diseases where the symptoms **come** in and then they **go** into remission so actually the cure might just be that some of the symptoms of the horrible skin disease **disappear** so **people think** they've been cured so in other words you have to understand why **people believe** something which is not you know which is falsifiable you know **we** no unless **you believe** in miracles there **is** no way that these things could could occur (ahlct028)

The noun *way* (650 occurrences) tends to have a more specific meaning than the word *people*, but there are many instances of its vague use. Apart from the definite article (275), it is often immediately preceded by *a* (97), *one* (26), and *some* (24).

rank	collocate	frequency	log likelihood
1	the	318	996.916
2	in	198	789.024
3	a	155	493.317
4	some	29	110.590
5	is	54	89.669
6	this	40	83.988
7	one	28	79.906
8	same	14	61.876
9	by	20	57.110
10	about	22	50.892
11	certain	9	49.208
12	such	9	45.828
13	[[voiced pause]]	46	42.800
14	another	9	34.712
15	's	32	34.668

Table 3: The left collocates of *way* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood)

The expression *a way* constitutes most frequently (54 times) a part of a prepositional phrase *in a way*, which can be used as a hedge (31 instances out of the 54, ex. 8). The same applies to *some way* which is a part of the hedge *in some way* (22 out of the 24 occurrences of *some way*), including 8 instances of *in some way or (an)other* (ex. 9). An alternative form of the hedge is in *one way or another* attested 5 times in the sub-corpus (ex. 10).This is reinforced by the use of other vague expressions and voiced pauses (ex. 11-12). Similarly to the noun *people*, the noun *way* is often preceded by voiced pause as the first (9) and second (15) element. This might again be a sign of insecurity when formulating the phrase (ex. 13). Many voiced pauses (12) appear after the noun as well.

(8) since the eighteenth century has been one the dominant and you know sort of endless tropes of French history anticlericalism so **in a way** what Lucien Febvre is doing is saying well let 's go back to the sixteenth century (ahlct028)

(9) it enables us to think **in some way or other** that even the most saintly person is motivated by the same base motivation as we are (ahlct035)

(10) Jimmie Durham says there are differences but there is no essential character to any one culture every culture is a hybridity in **one way or another** (ahlct031)

(11) the Balinese theatre i'll just spell that [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] in the nineteen-thirties and discovered that the way they moved [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] was [[voiced pause]]

quite odd **in a way** [[voiced pause]] they used quite sort of sharp jerky movements in what they were doing (ahlct017)

(12) it's very common to see [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] this sense that [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] private health care is in **some way** [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] is is is is a priority over [[voiced pause]] over N-H-S health care (ahlct014)

(13) these are ones which begin to feed in to [[voiced pause]] which begin to feed in to a new [[voiced pause]] **way** of looking at society (ahlct026)

ahlct019	disappearance in eighteen-o-six all these in	**in one way or another**	drew some of their inspiration from the
ahlct031	the early twentieth century all of which	**in one way or another**	tried to give a causal account of
ahlct031	one culture every culture is a hybridity	**in one way or another**	and this is i think very much what the
ahlct034	to us anything can resemble anything else	**in some way or other**	you know in what way is a raven like a
ahlct034	two objects one object resembles another	**in some way or other**	if that 's the case then it 's not very
ahlct034	a program which when this is carried out	**in some way or other**	results in an image now the point i 'm
ahlct035	explanations of human behaviour which	**in some way or other**	fill the gap between the everyday
ahlct035	people who still stake their reputation	**in one way or another**	on some of these theories now i [[voiced
ahlct035	appealing because it enables us to think	**in some way or other**	that even the most saintly person is
ahlct035	tactic is a kind of you know deflates them	**in some way or other**	so there 's a great appeal because of the
ahlct038	if we can [[voiced pause]] get round it	**in some way or another**	perhaps by flying then we have no qualms

Table 4: The concordance of *in one/some way or an/other*

The noun *sort* (617 occurrences) was the most frequent one in the bottom-up analysis, being part of the hedge *sort of*. When examining the BASE corpus, one can see that it is followed by *of* in the vast majority of cases (604), which suggests that it is indeed used as a hedge most of the time (ex. 10). Most often, *sort* is preceded by *a* (142), *the* (117) and *this* (55). The frequent use of the definite article and the demonstrative pronoun shows that rather than the whole expression being vague, the speaker wants to indicate that it is imprecise, which is the function of hedges. There is a strikingly high occurrence of voiced pauses before the noun *sort* (41), which points to another function of hedges - gaining more time to think about a precise formulation (ex. 11). Apart from pauses, *sort* is often accompanied by vague language devices, making the whole utterance quite indefinite (ex. 12).

(10) a huge attempt to construct a model of the capitalist system conceived almost like a machine with **a sort of** central [[voiced pause]] **sort of** floor at [[voiced pause]] at its heart (ahlct025)

(11) we think this is a very good [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] **sort of** case study for you to come to terms with (ahlct021)

(12) the big picture [[voiced pause]] if you like what's [[voiced pause]] Le Roy Ladurie is going into [[voiced pause]] [[voiced pause]] is is a **sort of** anthropological [[voiced pause]] mode and i think this does mark a shift in much of what the good writing in the Annales (ahlct029)

Similarly to *sort*, the noun *kind* (520 occurrences) is followed by *of* in most of the cases (505), indicating that it is often used as a part of a hedge (ex. 13). From the examination of the BASE corpus, it is apparent that this is true in most cases. However, there is a much higher occurrence of non-vague uses, where the noun *kind* is not a hedge but a noun denoting a specific category of referents (ex. 14). The elements most frequently preceding the noun *kind* in the corpus are the same as in the case of *sort*: *a* (176), *the* (84) and *this* (45). However, there is a much lower number of voiced pauses (8) before the noun *kind* than before *sort*, which supports the theory of a lower number of vague uses of the word *kind*. Apart from this, however, the two nouns are very similar in their use and surroundings.

(13) he wants to come up with some **kind of** laws of association you know just like Newton has this equation (037)

(14) language is a way of world-watching now what he means by this that the **kind of** language you use has a bearing on the way you perceive and think about the world (ahlct008)

The last noun we are going to discuss is *things* (509 occurrences). Most often, it is preceded by *the* (63), *of* (58), *these* (35), *other* (22). When examining the left context further, one can see that the majority of the definite articles are preceded by words such as *one of* (28), *some of* (5), *all* (4), reinforcing the vague meaning of the noun (ex. 15).

rank	collocate	frequency	log likelihood
1	of	153	465.171
2	these	44	223.246
3	the	111	159.323
4	all	34	137.563
5	other	27	122.338
6	material	15	121.143
7	one	31	108.725
8	corporeal	8	105.938
9	those	21	99.343
10	two	16	62.099
11	sorts	9	60.395
12	how	16	56.655
13	do	23	56.643
14	are	23	50.958
15	and	43	41.882

Table 5: The left collocates of *things* (scope [-3, 0], ranked by log likelihood)

The noun *things* is also preceded (14) and followed (13) by a considerable number of voiced pauses, indicating that the speaker is probably trying to think of a more specific formulation (ex. 16). The most frequent words following the noun *things* are *that* (63), *like* (56) and *which* (34), all of which usually introduce a postmodification of the noun. This somewhat lessens the vagueness of the whole phrase and centers it to the noun itself. The meaning of the whole phrase therefore tends to be not as generic as is the case of the noun *people*. The word *things* is probably usually chosen not because of the intention of creating vague meaning but because the speaker cannot recall an exact term. This insecurity is reinforced by the frequent use of hedges and stance markers in the same utterance as the noun *things*.

(15) you find how **things** actually were in the past and [[voiced pause]] by accumulation of facts found in archives and Ranke is that's **one of the things** that's also important about him he sort of [[voiced pause]] locates his his facts if you like within the archive (ahlct021)

(16) i've sort of given some of the [[voiced pause]] **things** here [[voiced pause]] very simplistically i would say (ahlct020)

(17) they've been trained in another generation they have a sense [[voiced pause]] they are out of touch with interesting **things** that are going on [[voiced pause]] in the world (ahlct028)

7.3 Pronouns

With regard to the inherent non-vagueness of some pronouns (negative, reflexive and wh-pronouns), we have included only potentially vague ones in the table.

rank	pronoun	frequency
1	one	508
2	something	495
3	anything	97
4	somebody	80
6	someone	69
7	anyone	54
8	anybody	23

Table 6: Vague pronouns: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities

The pronoun *one* can be used either in its generic sense, denoting a general human agent (ex. 18), or as a proform, in which case its meaning is specific (ex. 19). The words immediately following the pronoun *one* are most often verbs, mainly *can* (37), *is* (34) and *might* (31). Examining the patterns with *one* and a modal verb followed by a verb, it is clear that the dominant one is *one can see* (7; ex. 20). Common are also verbs of speaking (ex. 21). It is apparent from the examples that the pronoun *one* is frequently used in a vague sense, often as a part of hedges (e.g. ex. 20).

(18) and [[voiced pause]] **one can see** why the presentation of Pericles by Thucydides appealed to these liberals of the nineteenth century (ahlct003)

(19) keep the back that just that page and then that page and then that page yes **that one** then t**hat one** then **that one** it goes exactly there 's four pages (ahlct003)

(20) and yet i think what **one can see** here is that in parodying Dickens [[voiced pause]] she 's not parodying something which is not already there (ahlct013)

(21) and so as **one might say** [[voiced pause]] Kant [[voiced pause]] [[clears throat]] pr uses the general form of moral judgements (ahlct038)

The pronoun *something* is most often immediately preceded by the verb *is* (53) and the coordinating conjunction *or* (28). When looking at the words immediately following *something*, one can see two quite dominant patterns: *is something which* (16; ex. 22) and *is something that* (15; ex. 23). The conjunction *or* in the combination with *something* is often used as a vague coordination tag (ex. 24). Sometimes it is extended by *like that* (ex. 25)

(22) the relationship between these two this **is something which** constantly puzzles historians (ahlct026)

(23) the mention too of the seas in this area **is something that** again fascinates the Roman mind (ahlct005)

(24) we don't expect him to be uninterested reading his Beano **or something** you know while the [[voiced pause]] while the the the talk is going on (ahlct012)

(25) you might have a selection of fruit maybe some dead game **or something like that** as well that kind of thing (ahlct034)

The last pronoun we are going to discuss is *anything*. This pronoun is most often immediately preceded by the coordination conjunction *or* (7) and by the verb *do* (7). Similarly to the pronoun *something*, *anything* tends to form patterns with the conjunction *or*: most frequently *or anything else* (2; ex. 26) and *or anything like that* (2; ex. 27). *Do*, which is the most frequent verb preceding *anything*, tends to convey very general meanings in combination with the pronoun, especially as a general verb (ex. 28)

(26) that could be useful when you 're reading this **or anything else** (ahlct010)

(27) rather than talking about [[voiced pause]] sort of their personal matters **or anything like that** (ahlct014)

(28) if you had all those thoughts you already hit him before you **do anything** you just react straight away (ahlct036)

7.4 Adverbs

Although the representation of vague adverbs among the most frequent ones in the BASE corpus is not as high as that of vague nouns and pronouns, there are still some which have been identified as vague language devices in the previous analysis. These are namely the stance markers *actually*, *perhaps* and *probably*, and the discourse marker *really*.

rank	adverb	frequency
1	so	1,037
2	just	928
3	actually	611
4	really	517
5	well	489
6	also	456
7	okay	419
8	only	249
9	right	216
10	even	196
11	much	194
12	always	181
13	still	174
14	perhaps	166
15	often	162
16	probably	129
17	particularly	125
18	clearly	124
19	simply	119
20	already	119

Table 7: Adverbs: representation in BASE corpus; Arts and Humanities

The adverb *really* can be seen as a vague language device only when functioning as a discourse marker and making a reflection of the whole phrase. In other contexts, it is a stance marker without a vague meaning (cf. ex. 29 and 30). Similarly to the vague expressions discussed above, vague adverbs often occur in clusters with other vague language devices and voiced pauses indicating the insecurity of the speaker (ex. 31-32).

(29) one might argue that even in places where it looked like things changed they didn't **really** (ahlct007)

(30) now this might seem like a **really** obvious question (ahlct007)

(31) [[voiced pause]] [[clears throat]] very important footnotes in British history yeah **perhaps** some of the most important footnotes in British history but (ahlct001)

(32) and of course i can i think i'm right in saying that a whole lot of slaves African enslaved people many more died **probably** [[voiced pause]] after the abolition of slavery than during well **perhaps** you can't count it (ahlct001)

7.5 Corpus-supported analysis: Conclusion

The examination of a selection of nouns, pronouns and adverbs confirms the findings from the previous research. Vague expressions often appear in clusters, reinforcing the vagueness of the whole utterance. There is a significant number of occurrences of voiced pauses before and after many of the vague expressions, signalling the insecurity of the speaker about the formulation. Some of the words examined, especially nouns and pronouns, create significantly re-occurring patterns.

8 Conclusion

The present study revealed that vague expressions are a device frequently employed in Arts and Humanities lectures. Some of the most prominent reasons for the use of vague language devices in the lectures examined in the bottom-up analysis were hesitation about the phrasing, the endeavour to make the language sound more natural and less formal, signalling that the phrasing is only an approximation of the speaker's thoughts, trying to make the speech production faster and gaining time to formulate the following phrase precisely. Considering these results, it could be safely assumed that vague language devices indeed have an important role in communication and are not used only as empty fillers.

Some of the groups of vague expressions have a quite specific use (e.g. the only function of approximating adverbs is indicating the imprecision of the number stated); others share certain functions with other groups (e.g. hedges, discourse markers and general nouns can all be used to signal that the speaker is hesitant about the formulation). Due to their predominant functions, some of the groups dominate in specific parts of lectures. This is mainly the case of hedges (indication that the utterance is only an approximation of the speaker's thoughts but there is no time to think about the exact phrasing at the end of the lecture), stance markers (evaluation of the topic at the end of the lecture) and discourse markers (interaction with the students at the beginning of the lecture).

The bottom-up analysis revealed that there is a significant co-occurrence of certain groups of vague language devices, especially general nouns with quantifiers, stance markers with hedges and general nouns, and coordination tags with general nouns and quantifiers. Even the other types of vague expressions often appear in clusters, which is possibly due to their similar functions. The combination of different vague language devices generally reinforces the vagueness of the whole utterance, which is sometimes due to the confusion and hesitation of the speaker, but other times it is quite deliberate (e.g. when the speaker wants to signal that what he says is only his own evaluation of the topic and the listeners are welcome to make their own interpretations, he might use a combination of a hedge and a stance marker).

An interesting result of the bottom-up analysis was the identification of several groups of vague language devices, which were not described in the theoretical part of the thesis but their

functions were quite similar to those of some other groups. This is the case of general pronouns and general verbs, which share some of the functions of general nouns, and epistemic modal verbs, whose application is similar to that of stance markers.

The corpus-supported analysis showed the high frequency of the employment of potentially vague words in the academic lectures examined. From the list of most frequently used nouns, pronouns and adverbs, many tend to have a general meaning or occur within the frame of one of the vague language devices described in the previous research. The inspection of the words chosen and their collocations showed that they often co-occur with other general words (e.g. the noun *people* is frequently followed by verbs in the present simple form, indicating that there is no time restriction and thus bolstering the general meaning of the noun).

Due to the universal nature of such collocations, it is natural that they appear in high frequency throughout the lectures. It is presumably for this reason that many of the vague words form significantly re-occurring patterns. This is especially the case of the words which have become part of fixed phrases such as *in a way, one can see, or something like that*. Their frequent use suggests that they have specific functions as vague language devices (e.g. as hedges). Some of the words examined occur almost exclusively in a collocation with another word (*sort of, kind of*).

There is a strikingly high occurrence of voiced pauses surrounding the vague words examined. This could be explained by the hesitation of the speaker about the precise formulation, and then opting for the safer general word. This explanation supports the claims made in the bottom-up analysis, especially about general nouns.

The results of the analysis confirm the hypothesis that, in spite of the seeming incongruity of the register of academic lectures and vague language, there is a relatively high frequency of vague expressions in the lectures. They have proved to have diverse functions, varying from the expression of insecurity to the sign of politeness. The combination of academic language and vague language devices creates an interesting contrast and it could be asserted that the acquisition of vague language strategies can prove to be an advantage to lecturers.

9 References and Sources

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The recordings and transcriptions used in this study come from the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/celte/research/base/). The corpus was developed at the Universities of Warwick and Reading under the directorship of Hilary Nesi (Warwick) and Paul Thompson (Reading). Corpus development was assisted by funding from the Universities of Warwick and Reading, BALEAP, EURALEX, the British Academy and the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

10 České résumé

Bakalářská práce se zabývala vágními jazykovými prostředky používanými v univerzitních přednáškách z oblasti humanitních věd. V teoretické části byl vymezen význam vágnosti oproti nejednoznačnosti a implicitnosti a byly popsány nejčastější funkce vágních výrazů v komunikaci. Dále bylo vyjmenováno sedm skupin nejčastěji používaných vágních jazykových prostředků (*hedges*, *general nouns*, *discourse markers*, *stance markers*, *coordination tags*, *approximating adverbs*, *quantifiers*) a jejich použití. V druhé části teoretického úseku práce byla popsána funkce jazyka obecně v univerzitních přednáškách. Byly vymezeny rozdíly mezi mluveným a psaným akademickým jazykem (zejména větší obsáhlost slovní zásoby a složitější větná struktura v psaném jazyce, oproti tomu lepší možnost vyjádřit vlastní názory mluvčího v mluveném projevu) a důvody pro tuto rozdílnost. Dále byly v teoretické části práce vyjmenovány a popsány funkce a subfunkce přednášek obecně, s větším důrazem na funkce, které se týkají přednášek z oblasti humanitních věd.

Východiskem pro praktickou část bakalářské práce byla hypotéza, že ačkoli by se mohlo zdát, že se vágní jazykové prostředky s akademickým jazykem příliš neslučují, vyskytuje se jich v univerzitních přednáškách poměrně velké množství. Příčinou jsou funkce vágních výrazů popsané v teoretické části práce (např. nejistota, snaha získat čas na přesnou formulaci nebo dát najevo zdvořilost). V univerzitních přednáškách se proto setkáváme se zajímavým kontrastem mezi formálním akademickým jazykem a často hovorovými vágními jazykovými prostředky.

Pro první úsek praktické části bylo excerpováno 6 úryvků přednášek (každý o počtu 2000 slov) z oblasti humanitních věd z korpusu BASE. Byly vybrány dva úryvky z počátečních, dva z prostředních a dva ze závěrečných částí přednášek. Úkolem bylo v úryvcích najít a označit všechny vágní výrazy, zjistit počty vágních výrazů v jednotlivých skupinách popsaných v teoretické části a popsat jejich nejčastější funkce v úryvcích přednášek. Nejčastější nalezené funkce vágních výrazů byly snaha působit přirozeněji a méně formálně, potíže s vybavením si přesné formulace, snaha dát posluchačům najevo, že formulace není přesným vyjádřením myšlenky mluvčího a snaha urychlit tempo přednášky, když si posluchači mohou přesný výraz odvodit sami. Z těchto výsledků je patrné, že vágní jazykové prostředky jsou používány záměrně a mají různé důležité funkce v řečové produkci.

Analýza pokračovala zjišťováním, ve kterých částech přednášek se vyskytuje nejvíce vágních jazykových prostředků, které skupiny jsou v těchto částech nejpočetnější, a proč tomu tak je. Nejvyšší výskyt vágních výrazů byl v úryvcích ze zakončení přednášek. Dá se předpokládat, že pro tento jev existují dvě vysvětlení: mluvčí si uvědomuje, že se přednáška chýlí ke konci, a snaží se dokončit téma na úkor přesných vyjádření, proto využívá množství vágních výrazů vyjadřujících, že následující formulace není zcela precizní (zejména *hedges*); přednášející na konci přednášky do tématu vstupuje s vlastním ohodnocením, přičemž používá vágní jazykové prostředky vyjadřující míru jistoty (zejména *stance markers*). Poměrně vysoký výskyt vágních jazykových prostředků byl i v úvodních částech přednášek. Vzhledem k počáteční organizaci hodiny zde byla nejdůležitější interaktivní funkce, proto ve vágních výrazech dominovaly *discourse markers*.

Nakonec se analýza zaměřila na zkoumání toho, jestli se vágní jazykové prostředky vyskytují spíše samostatně nebo ve společnosti dalších vágních výrazů a které skupiny se nejčastěji objevují spolu. Výzkum ukázal, že některé skupiny vágních výrazů mají tendenci vyskytovat se často ve shlucích s jinou skupinou (např. *general nouns* a *quantifiers*). Přestože některé skupiny vágních výrazů se většinou objevují samostatně, obecně by se dalo říci, že vágní výrazy velice často tvoří shluky. Tento jev by se dal vysvětlit tím, že se mnohé skupiny vágních výrazů používají ve stejných situacích (např. když je mluvčí nejistý a nemůže si vzpomenout na výraz, který chce použít), proto jich mluvčí v dané situaci použije více. Vzrůstající množství vágních prostředků zvyšuje vágnost promluvy.

Zajímavým výsledkem analýzy bylo nalezení několika skupin vágních jazykových prostředků, které nebyly popsány v teoretické části práce, ale měly velice podobné funkce jako některé jiné skupiny. Toto se týká skupin *general pronouns* a *general verbs*, které mají podobné použití jako *general nouns*. Epistemická modální slovesa se využívají v podobných případech jako *stance markers*.

Vágní výrazy nalezené v první části analýzy nejčastěji ze všech slovních druhů obsahovaly podstatná jména, zájmena a příslovce. Druhá část analýzy byla proto korpusový výzkum těchto slovních druhů ve všech přednáškách z oblasti humanitních věd v korpusu BASE. Podle očekávání se ve frekvenčních seznamech těchto individuálních slovních druhů vyskytovalo poměrně velké množství slov, u kterých by se dalo očekávat, že mají často vágní

význam. Od každého slovního druhu bylo vybráno několik slov, u kterých byly podrobeny výzkumu jejich kolokace a bezprostřední okolí.

Z podstatných jmen byla vybrána slova *people, way, sort, kind* a *things*. Poslední tři jmenovaná se vyskytovala již v první analýze - *sort* a *kind* jako součásti *hedges* a *things* samostatně jako *general noun*. V korpusu se podstatná jména *people* a *things* často objevovala za kvantifikátory, z čehož lze soudit, že mluvčí má na mysli nekonkrétní skupinu lidí a prohlášení je univerzálně aplikovatelné. To potvrzuje i nejčastější použití sloves v přítomném čase prostém, naznačujícím univerzální platnost výroku, bezprostředně za slovem *people*. Analýza tedy potvrdila, že podstatná jména *people* a *things* označují často velice univerzální a nekonkrétní jevy.

Zajímavým zjištěním bylo, že podstatná jména *sort* a *kind* se vyskytují téměř ve všech případech bezprostředně následována předložkou *of*. Z analýzy promluv obsahujících tato slovní spojení je patrné, že *kind* a *sort* jsou nejčastěji používané jako součást *hedges*, i když u spojení *kind of* je tento jev o něco méně markantní, protože často nese i nevágní význam *druh něčeho*. Převládající užití těchto dvou podstatných jmen jako součást *hedges* potvrzuje jejich převažující vágnost. Slovo *way* se překvapivě také velice často objevovalo v rámci *hedges,* např. ve spojení *in a way*. Vybraná podstatná jména se tedy často objevují buď v rámci samostatné vágní fráze, nebo ve slovním spojení reflektujícím vágnost jiné formulace. Ukázalo se také, že v blízkosti těchto podstatných jmen se objevuje poměrně vysoké množství jiných vágních prostředků.

Pro analýzu zájmen byla vybrána slova *one, something* a *anything*. U zájmena *one* bylo opět nutné oddělit vágní význam (generické zájmeno) od specifického významu (proforma). Ve svém generickém významu tvořilo nejčastěji frázi *one can see*, která může fungovat jako *hedge*. Zájmeno *something* se oproti tomu často vyskytovalo jako součást vágního výrazu *or something* (případně *or something like that*), který byl v předchozí analýze identifikován jako *coordination tag*. Zájmeno *anything*, ačkoli v menším zastoupení, mělo podobnou funkci jako *something*. Z analýzy zájmen je patrné, že se velice často vyskytují ve fixních řetězcích, které se v mluvě často opakují. Stejně jako u podstatných jmen se i v okolí těchto zájmen vyskytovalo množství dalších vágních prostředků.

Poslední část analýzy se zaměřila na příslovce. Ve frekvenční tabulce se objevilo několik slov identifikovaných v první části analýzy jako *stance markers* (*actually, perhaps, probably*)

a jedno identifikované jako *discourse marker* (*really*). Stejně jako u předchozích dvou skupin, i vybraná příslovce se vyznačovala množstvím jiných vágních prostředků ve svém okolí.

Analýza tedy potvrdila úvodní hypotézu, že i přes zdánlivě špatnou slučitelnost vágního jazyka a jazyka akademického se v přednáškách vyskytuje poměrně vysoké množství vágních jazykových prostředků, které mají rozmanité funkce. Kombinace akademického jazyka a vágních jazykových prostředků vytváří zajímavý kontrast a lze tvrdit, že osvojení strategií spojených s používáním vágních výrazů může být pro přednášející výhodou.

Appendix

Hedge
General noun
Discourse marker
Stance marker
Modal verb
Coordination tag
Approximating adverb
Quantifier
General pronoun
General verb

1. ahlct029 - *The Annales: Braudel and beyond* (History); beginning (2000 words)

1. nm0093: good morning how are you all all right good just a few notices just a
2. reminder after this er er today er one o'clock in room H-four-o-three there's
3. an open day for potential graduate students so if you're thinking of going on
4. doing er er graduate work postgraduate work in er this university or elsewhere
5. go along and er chat er have a discussion room H-four-o-three secondly this
6. same time next week and in this room there will be a session for er students
7. for third year students er er a sort of careers session b-, w-, there'll be
8. publicity going up over the next week but it's targeted at you er so if you're
9. thinking you might like a job at the end of all this [laughter] er [laughter]
10. whatever er that is that could be helpful and useful for you so trees b-, er
11. book that time this th-, this place one o'clock
12. after the lecture next week and there'll be a session and then thirdly i'm told
13. that there is a er sign up notice about library skills er sessions er aimed at
14. second and third year students intended to focus on library reference and
15. bibiliographical sources in the library and also remote sites accessed via the
16. Internet er this is i mean i know you probably all know all this stuff anyway
17. but particularly if you're going to do a long essay associated with your
18. special subject or whatever this year this could be very helpful for you so
19. there there there is a er two two times so it's on a sign up basis it'll be on
20. the board one is er actually good lord it's today i wonder why i've been given
21. this to to talk today it's at one o'clock so er there's again there's another
22. clash er there for you er so i would just turn up and it's in er library
23. training room i-, floor one of the library

nm0093:

24. the Annales we left it last week er just in the post-war moment er in which f-,
25. academic life in France as most of the wester-, the rest of the western Europe
26. is re-, reorganizing itself if you like in the aftermath of er er the war and
27. as i argued what happens then is that er an intellectual grouping associated
28. with a history periodical the Annales er which in the s-, from its inception in
29. nineteen-twenty-nine through the thirties had been a crusading a crusading
30. journal if you like for a new kind er of history er secures a very firm
31. institutional base at the heart of the of higher education and er er the
32. research establishment er within er er within France and that what that stood
33. for was er a greater openness in French er in the French historical

34. establishment er thereafter er towards social economic and cultural history
35. i mean the the journal ref-, rec-, renamed itself as i as i mentioned last time
36. the Annales has gone through a number of er changes of name er rech-, changed
37. its name to Annales
38. well it's usually E-S-C Ã©conomies economies sociÃ©tÃ©s societies civilisation
39. er economy soci-, s-, e-, economic history social history cultural history
40. that's the sort of triad of values which this new type of history of the
41. thirties had established a move away from the politico er er e-, political
42. elitist type of narrative history which had been as i was arguing was the norm
43. in er French historical departments or establishments er hither-, hitherto and
44. that and this is the last point i i left you with really it is at that moment
45. that there appears a work which would be the flagship if you like of the
46. Annales approach which er Lucien Febvre who is the s-, the do-, doctoral
47. supervisor the doctoral er of of this doctoral dissertation er f-, Lucien
48. Febvre says i-, it's everything we've been looking for and waiting er for it
49. will be the work of a man Fernand Braudel who had spent most of the er Second
50. World War in a prisoner of war camp in Germany and there had written on old
51. school er notebooks the
52. core of a thesis which he'd researched er in the nineteen-thirties in a number of
53. er er locations er which were sustained as a thesis and which was published
54. in nineteen-forty-nine as The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the
55. Age of Philip the Second published in nineteen-forty-nine author Fernand
56. Braudel Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of er er Philip
57. the Second the sixteenth century er broadly speaking this a classic work and if
58. you're doing the Annales you do Braudel you know about this er er this work he
59. had been a pupil of er Lucien Febvre a doctoral student working under Lucien
60. Febvre in the nineteen-er -thirties he'd had a number of postings including one
61. in SÃŁo Paulo in er Argentina but had spent as i say most of the war in a
62. concentration camp where he was sort of writing up very good place to write up
63. i would think a as long as you can get paper and pen a conc-, a concentration
64. camp doesn't have the sort of
65. diversions of er er other sort of er er localities bit grim sometimes i'm sure
66. but er er er publishes it nineteen-forty-nine goes into a re-edition in
67. nineteen-seventy-two it is one of the classics of twentieth century
68. historiography why what's so special about it and more pertinently for what
69. we're saying now how does it link up to er that new kind of history why is it
70. seen as a sort of er a role model a flagship of this new genre of Annales style
71. history well one thing you can say about it absolutely it is not the kind of
72. small scale study which Febvre and Bloch had argued before history had been
73. obsessed with before you know ministries and er kings and all the rest of it it
74. i**s** er a massive it has a massive focus it is at the heart of the study is the
75. history of a sea the Mediterranean Sea not even a small sea er a very big er er
76. sea it's not small se-, er er small scale it is non-Eurocentric because one of
77. the interesting things about this is er one of the numerous things which are
78. interesting about it is that it is er a s-, er the Mediterranean is a er a sea
79. which abuts on two three er continents and therefore you can write a history
80. which is not as Eurocentric as most of the history had been written er hitherto
81. he's as interested in other words in the southern and eastern shores of the er
82. Mediterranean as its er European er er er er fringe as well it is very clearly

83. an anti well even yes i think anti certainly non but even anti politicocentric
84. er text as well and er br-, Braudel tells the story how of how when he was
85. starting his er doctoral research he he wanted to work on the diplomatic
86. history of the age of Philip the Second er and indeed that study is still there
87. but it's encased er i-, within a much broader er framework as as er we'll see
88. it is fourthly avowedly and very sort of magnificently interdisciplinary er
89. sociology economics cultural history er demography i think that's coming in as
90. well in other words the study of population in the past through
91. quantitive er er m-, er materials assembled in any way through parish records
92. or or whatever i think that's one of the big you know developments in post-war
93. French history the way in which population history gets written into er the way
94. in which French history er er is done and the other discipline i think which it
95. draws very heavily on and which again goes back to the Annales sort of paradigm
96. is geography er you know this is a a geographical history in fact sometimes
97. called geohistory Braudel's geohistory as it you see that sometimes in er
98. referred to er it's got a hero this st-, story this narrative but the hero's
99. not a man or a woman it's a sea er the sea is absolutely at the heart the the
100. you know the topic of the of the of the book and he goes on i mean one of one
101. of the other works which he does which i think isn't quite as er as er sort of
102. earth shattering as this really er on capitalism in the early modern period
103. which again is goes on from this and tr-, tries to see er do a history of not
104. just the s-,
105. the Mediterranean but of the whole the whole world a sort of global history er
106. which brings in the geographical factors in particular and which is very
107. interdisciplinary er a-, so extremely interdisciplinary and this
108. is something which he continues er with and another i think central feature of
109. the work which i'd really highlight which i think is what brau-, one of the
110. things that Braudel brings to er the Annales framework or the Annales paradigm
111. and gives it a sort of very distinctive feel about is his notion of time so
112. when i'm talking about fernel Fernand Braudel's time i'm not just thinking of
113. the moment of Fernand Braudel the advent of for-, Fernand Braudel in the late
114. forties i'm thinking also of his notion of er er er time it links his notion of
115. time links back to those critiques of narrative and political narrative which
116. Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch were making agai-, er er in the past er against
117. that sort of political emphasis er er o-, on er er l-, er against that idea
118. that history had to be told through the narrative of a ruling elite or a king
119. or a ministry er or whatever and implicit in that against the idea that time is
120. something which is linear linear and can be followed by a narrative er mode so
121. you just you know history is what happened next er er if you like and that
122. comes out er in in the way in which history er was and to a certain extent is
123. written by many er er people not only is it unilinear is it it is also
124. homogeneous er so basically it follows the same frameworks as political history
125. how many of us not have not read something like you know Society in the Age of
126. er Louis the Fourteenth or Population in Society in Victorian England so
127. accepting the political framework and working within er with those for Braudel
128. time i think had little to do with dates of kings and ministries er but rather
129. time er pulsates to social economic cultural even geographical er rhythms in
130. the preface to The Mediterranean World he
131. says he sort of started on this biography well this diplomatic history rather

132. of er Phillip the Second and he decided he'd work not just on Spanish diplomatic
133. documents but as many diplomatic documents as he could so he look-,
134. went all over the Mediterranean all over Europe looking at other er er records
135. and he said there came a moment there came a moment and he got interested in
136. population and society and economics and all the rest of it there came a moment
137. when he s-, he s-, said he suddenly had a sort of moment of realization that
138. Philip the Second who after all was going to be the hero the centre the
139. absolute centre of this study was and i'm quoting more acted upon than actor he
140. was plus agi qu'acteur he was more acted upon er than actor now this obviously
141. is recalling and i think probably fairly consciously er the i-, er in in by
142. Braudel the idea outlined by Marx

2. ahlct037 - *Hume's Treatise* (Philosophy); beginning (2000 words)

1. nf0157: er okay er i'll just say a few things about the book er w-, as you know
2. we've spent last term and the first part of this term talking about Locke and
3. Berkeley er we're now moving on to Hume so the next six lectures er the last
4. six lectures of this course are on Hume this is a copy of Hume's Treatise er
5. i'll say a little bit more about that in a minute so that hopefully it will
6. reach a larger audience when a few more people have got here er so i'm just
7. going to say i'm going to say a few things about Hume and a few things about
8. the Treatise er and then we'll start by looking at Hume's sort of philosophical
9. method you might call it okay so Hume out of the three philosophers we study on
10. this course Hume is probably the most famous of the three and he's certainly
11. he's famous for his very very famous theories of cause and effect whicfh we'll
12. look at in a couple of weeks' time and
13. for his influence on later philosophers particularly Kant who of course you're
14. looking at in Modern Phil Texts er that is unless you're joint honours er
15. handout er Hume of course follows on from Locke and Berkeley he's an empiricist
16. like Locke and Berkeley like Locke and Berkeley he thinks that all of our
17. interest and knowledge is derived from experience and we'll be talking much
18. more about that today what that actually comes down to for Hume and he's also
19. following on from the arguments from the kind of from the challenges that were
20. laid down by Locke and Berkeley so he takes on a lot of Locke's er a lot of the
21. the terminology used by Locke and Berkeley and he looks at another lot of the
22. same kind of problems i mean particularly he's interested in abstraction and
23. scepticism whether Locke and berk-, whether Locke's account in particular ap-,
24. implies er scepticism about the ex-, external world whether empiricism implies
25. scepticism about the external world and er the most i mean
26. one of the most famous things that he takes on from Locke and Berkeley is is
27. the theory of personal identity er he looks at Locke's account he looks at
28. Berkeley's account and then he proposes his own account and we'll be looking at
29. personal identity the very last lecture of this term in week ten er but i mean
30. so those those are Hume's er some of Hume's philosophical antecedent why he's
31. called an empiricist but i mean i think one of the another really huge
32. influence on Hume which i talked about in the very first lecture of this course
33. back at the beginning of last term with Newton er Hume's a scientist really he
34. he's he's really taking a scientific method and applying it to philosophy so
35. Newton offers us this this kind of mechanistic account of matter it's this this

whole new science of matter in which all of the movements of of particles of
bodies can be described in terms of equations so it's moving towards the kind of
deterministic science that we really take for granted
today the fact that if something happens in the world there will be a reason
for it there'll be an explanation for it and Hume in i-, i mean this is really
i suppose the the biggest shift in thinking in Hume is that Hume saw man as
another part of the natural world i mean just another part of the natural world
and and if you think well okay so what's so exciting about that i mean just
think about how the rationalists say Descartes viewed viewed man in the
rationalist picture of of human kind is of this sort of this being in the image
of God someone who whose life is governed controlled purely by reason right so
for the rationalists you know you're not a part of nature sort of swept along
with everything else your reason governs your life you have control in virtue
of being a rational animal right that's the rationalist picture but Hume
completely turns that on its head i mean it's te-, in reason is the slave of
the passions very famous
quote from Hume reason is the slave of the passions so reason is is a sort of
secondary thing the passions the emotions the feelings are what really govern
us and not reason reason is something that comes in later and er i mean so
basically what that means is that man humans are just another part of the
natural world we can explain human behaviour in exactly the same kind of way as
we explain things scientifically and then again i mean just as a sort of modern
comparison i mean you might want to think about Searle that you did last year
in part one i mean the sort of contrast between the kinds of exan-,
explanations we offer of of human action and the kinds of explanations of
scientific phenomena basically what Hume's saying is there's one kind of
explanation that's applicable to all of these things i mean obviously the the
things we're explaining are slightly different in in terms of humans in terms
of of of human thought human action we're dealing with
with maybe ideas or thoughts or whatever as opposed to physical objects but
basically there's one kind of explanation and it's a naturalistic kind of
explanation so that's the the the huge sort of shift in thinking that that we
get in Hume and i mean Hume Hume sees this as a kind of an experimental enquiry
so h-, he takes this empirical scientific method which Newton applied with such
success but which goes right i mean you may remember the historical sort of
picture i was giving you back at in at at the end of at the beginning of last
term er th-, the sort of going right back to Bacon the sort of empiri-, the
rise of empirical science and Hume's taken that picture and what he wants to
derive is write some the science of man okay so Newton gave us this er when
somebody starts writing this down you see this is Newton gave us the science of
matter and Hume is giving us the science of man along exactly the same lines so
he wants to come up with some kind of
laws of association you know just like Newton has this equation you can draw
the the fall of a billiard ball or whatever the the fall of a not a billiard
ball things that you drop off towers and things you can measure their velocity
in terms of the forces acting on it Hume thought a similar kind of account
would be possible for the man the reason for what goes on in our our
understanding er right okay how does he do this well how are we going to how
are we going to empirically investigate the human mind well of course the

85. methods of neuroscience the methods of of you know looking at medical methods
86. looking at people's brains obviously weren't very far advanced and anyway maybe
87. that's the wrong place to look i mean Hume's interested in thoughts and
88. feelings and so on so really the method that we use is of course introspection
89. we look into our own minds we see what's going on there and we can posit laws
90. relations we can carry out this empirical investigation
91. into all the whole nature of human understanding so this is the project well in
92. the the next six lectures so today and and the rest of this course er we're
93. going to look at various topics in Hume's philosophy and these taken from book
94. one of Hume's Treatise of Human Nature so this is the Treatise it's a very fat
95. book er however this this particular one is very fat because it contains a
96. large amount of introductory material and er glossaries and notes
97. and all this kind of stuff if you're going to buy the Treatise so this is a quick st-, step
98. back from Hume for a second 'cause i wanted to say this at the beginning er if
99. you want to buy a copy of this this is very very good value this is a tenner
100. and it's quite can you see how thick it is that's quite a lot of book for a
101. tenner if you given how expensive philosophy books are er this is edited by
102. Norton and Norton er and it was on the reading list right at the start of term
103. so you should have that already er there are ve-, er they
104. should be available in the bookshop i haven't actually checked i did ask them
105. to order some copies er there are lots of other editions of the Treatise so you
106. don't have to get this one but this one's got a very big fat introduction so er
107. it it might be useful er the Treatise in fact has has three books in it er and
108. we're only going to be looking at book one book one is entitled Of the
109. Understanding so this is Hume's the the beginning of hu-, Hume's science of man
110. as it applies to to reason and to thought er we'll be look-, i-, it basically
111. introduces this philosophical method and then it looks at applying that to
112. a number of philosophical issues such as space and time causation knowledge and
113. belief personal identity er the second book is is Of the Passions so that is an
114. account of o-, o-, a a really i mean an account that was discredited for a
115. while because of things like Freudian psychoanalysis and things like that but
116. now is is is people looking at it more and it
117. gives an account of the emotions the desires things like pride and lust and and
118. and pity and and and of course human freedom which is probably one of the most
119. important things in a in book two and then book three is is Hume's moral
120. philosophy and i'm not sure i meant to ask Philip whether you do any hu-, of
121. Hume's moral philosophy do you do any of Hume's moral philosophy in your morals
122. course well even if you don't it's certainly something that people will refer
123. to so the the moral philosophy is in book three of the Treatise but as i said
124. we're only going to be looking at book one and we're going to look at number of
125. topics from book one we're going to start by looking at Hume's philosophical
126. method and then next week we'll talk about belief then two weeks on his theory
127. of causation his scepticism and then finally his theory of personal identity that's the
128. plan any questions about Hume in general cool right okay so what i
129. want to do today is just i mean having
130. sort of given you a little tiny tiny bit of an overview of what Hume's about er
131. is just look at that he's basically his his tennets of his empiricism what his
132. empiricism means for Hume how he sets it out what the basic principles he's
133. working with are and these basic principles are vital because these are the

principles that he later applies when he comes to look at specific problems so
when he looks at causation he uses the principles we're going to look at today
in order to analyse the notion of of cause so this is basically the the most
important ground work the basic foundations of of Hume's empiricism and er this
er basically comes down to his distinction between ideas and impressions and
what he does with it so this is on the handout er c-, first talk about what the
distinction is why it's important and what we might think

3. ahlct013 - *Approaches to Virginia Woolf's 'Orlando: a Biography' (1928)* (English); middle (2000 words)

so it's a kind of death writing if you want er so even if the camera and the
photographic image is literal and true and true to its subject the model is
manipulated as Vita was and in her case she's manipulated to dress up in skimpy
clothes to present a different version of herself er and i've put a couple of
the the photographs of her on the sheet where i think she's very much being
made to dress up you know she's she's dressing up to play a part er [sniff] and
of course she is then further fictionalized by the context within which the
photograph is placed in the text the images of Vita Sackville-West in Orlando A
Biography become fictionalized as images of this totally fantastic subject er
or should that be fantasized by Virginia Woolf as images of her fictionalized
fictional subject er either way the indelible print of truth is now through
Virginia Woolf's playfulness and manipulations er a very kind of slippery
concept er it's it's an image this footprint of truth whose meaning i think
keeps slipping between
different levels of signification er so is this just an elaborate joke the butt
of the humour being Virginia Woolf's father er so an obituary to the late
Victorian man of letters and his culture is it a homage to Vita it was
described by s-, by some people at the time as the longest love letter in the
English language er is it a very ambiguous flirtation with the English
aristocracy by an avowedly socialist and feminist writer er i think the
parodying of biographical conventions opens up all of these possibilities er in
the reading of the text and of course it's that playfulness which allows
Virginia Woolf to do all those things how am i doing for time er the the second
of my er extracts excuse me i'm my voice is going [sniff] the second of my
extracts is from the start of chapter five and beneath it i have put probably
totally illegible i apologize for that but just to draw it to your attention
the first
chapter of Charles Dickens' Bleak House if you remember chapter five is the
point when we've just got into the nineteenth century so what i want to suggest
is that throughout Orlando Virginia Woolf parodies the style the literary style
of the historical period she's talking about so that i-, in chapter five when
we get into the nineteenth century she quite self-consciously deliberately
parodies the prose of Dickens [cough] i don't know if i've got time just to
read you a little of that the great cloud which hung not only over London but
over the whole of the British Isles on the first day of the nineteenth century
stayed or rather did not stay for it was buffeted about constantly by
blustering gales long enough to have extraordinary consequences upon those who
lived beneath its shadow a change seemed to have come over the climate of

39. England rain fell frequently but only in fitful gusts which were no sooner over
40. than they began again
41. and then she moves from that to er a kind of developing of the metaphor of
42. dampness dampness er in all its possible kind of workings and connotations is
43. an elaborately developed over at at least two pages and i won't go into
44. all that now 'cause that would be perhaps tedious in a lecture er [sniff] but it is
45. very similar to what Charles Dickens does at the start of Bleak House where he
46. takes again a kind of er a climate metaphor this time fog er the great London
47. smog and develops it into a metaphor for the workings of er Chancery the court
48. of Chancery the Lord Chancellor er and again starts by what appears to be
49. possibly realistic description but then moves into er a kind of fantastical
50. mode which totally leaves realism behind i mean one of the things one can
51. perhaps say about Virginia Woolf is that she's writing er in a modernist
52. tradition and that one might try and define modernism as coming after
53. nineteenth century social realism and therefore b-, having as its its er its
54. style that of antirealism
55. er and yet i think what one can see here is that in parodying Dickens er she's
56. not parodying something which is not already there Dickens himself often moves
57. off into fantastical and kind of gothic er elements as ways of making a comment
58. on the social situation so that's another kind of parody which goes on
59. throughout this this novel and again something you might want to do in more
60. detail on your own or in seminar is kind of work out what other prior texts are
61. being parodied by Virginia Woolf er but i do want to to mention the fact and
62. that's over the page on the sheet that she also parodies herself er she
63. parodies the Time Passes section of To the Lighthouse which is the novel which
64. i said at the start is based on her childhood kind of summers spent at Talland
65. House er and has er an elaborate first section where the comings and goings in
66. the house are described at length and then moves into a short middle section
67. called Time Passes where the whole of the Great
68. War is kind of dealt with in a few pages and including you know people kind of
69. dying on battlefields er the miss-, Mrs Ramsey character dying and so on er and
70. again i've just taken a small amount for the sheet to give you a kind of a feel
71. for it er it's it's it it's that sense of trying to capture the passing of time
72. kind of skimming over the top of it rather telling er details as you might
73. normally er so my fifth extract is from the Time Passes section of To the
74. Lighthouse night after night summer and winter the torment of storms the arrow-
75. like stillness of fine weather held their court without interference listening
76. had there been anyone to listen from the upper rooms of the empty house only
77. gigantic chaos streaked with lightning could have heard tumbling and tossing as
78. the winds and waves disported themselves like the amorphous bulks of leviathans
79. whose brows are pierced by no light of reason mounted one on top of another and
80. lunged and plunged in the darkness
81. or the daylight for night and day month and year ran shapelessly together in
82. idiot games until it seemed as if the universe were battling and tumbling in
83. brute confusion and wanton lust aimlessly by itself well i tried to read that
84. with a slight sense of how easy it might be to parody that slightly breathless
85. style er which is in effect what Virginia Woolf does in what i put on as the
86. fourth extract on the sheet it was now November after November comes December
87. then January February March and April after April comes May June July August

follow next is September then October and so behold here we are back at
November again with the whole year accomplished er [sniff] but clearly there
you know it's the poor biographer who she's she's turning into a kind of butt
at her sense of humour and i do think there may be behind this again a kind of
serious philosophical point but i'll come to that in a minute okay so that's
just to alert
you to different kinds of parody in the text and i'm not going to kind of carry
on talking about that now because i want to talk about the whole issue of
writing history er before we finish [sniff] okay so my next sish-, section is
about history [cough] [sniff] and i just want to quote you again something i
quoted you earlier and just listen to it carefully Vita was the latest in a
line of the noble Sackvilles whose history she had lovingly written a few years
before Orlando in Knole and the Sackvilles nineteen-twenty-two on which Woolf
drew extensively for her background to the novel so i quoted that to you that
earlier in the lecture as a quick way of providing some background information
about Vita Sackville-West and about the fact that she had an aristocratic
family background however i want to come back to the quotation and think about
the exact phrasing which Rachel Bowlby uses here she
says whose history she had lovingly written a few years before it's very
careful very carefully chosen phrase and yet even Rachel Bowlby who i think is
a great stylist cannot avoid the ambiguity of the word history does she mean
Vita wrote down lovingly the authentic and true record of events as they
actually happened or does she mean Vita wrote down her account of her family's
past for in the English language history refers both to what has happened in
the past as it happened at the time er which is perhaps what we imply by kind of
saying colloquially you know that's history he's history whatever meaning
you know it's past it's over i don't have to bother about it er but history
also refers to the writing of history the study of history er the activity of
historians working with secondary sources and producing a kind of narrative
account er which we should perhaps more accurate-, accurately refer to as as
historiography er in fact the only kind of
history we can ever know is actually the second historiography th-, the telling
of the past shaping an account telling a story about it using a variety of
sources to build up to build up what an accurate account of the past an as
accurate a picture as possible or you know my interpretation of events as
opposed to somebody else's interpretation of events er arguably even when we
try to build up as accurate a picture as possible inevitably all we actually do
is give you know our interpretation of events my own interpretation of events
er so in the nineteenth century historians tended to believe that political
history was more valuable than other kinds of history that the stories of
nations could be told through the exploits of famous men military leaders
rulers ambassadors diplomats whatever [sniff] er and in fact there was a whole
series called Story of Nations which i don't suppose anyone here is is kind of
old enough to
remember but anyway but there are other ways of telling stories of the past
which might concentrate on the daily existence of very ordinary people er and
in fact that approach to historical studies didn't really begin to be developed
until around the time that Virginia Woolf was writing Orlando er the first
issue of Annales came out in nineteen-twenty-nine er and this was a French

journal which was the focus for a new trend in historical studies pioneered
i think mainly by hi-, French historians and which led eventually to choosing my
favourite er text like er Le Roy Ladurie's Montaillou Village Occitan er which
came out in nineteen-seventy-five er Montaillou er Occitan Village from er
twelve-ninety-four to thirteen-twenty-four takes just a very short time span
and writes about what happens in the village in those rather turbulent times er
[sniff] Knole and the Sackvilles tells us from its
title that it is a story of a stately home and its illustrious family
Montaillou Village Occitan on the other hand is about a small peasant village
and its inhabitants at a turbulent moment in the history of the region and one
of the things it talks about is the the the Countess who lives there and and
her kind of er her amour but it's only one of the things it's not the central
focus er so as so often in her writing by critiquing the style and the
underlying ideological assumptions

4. ahlct014 - *Medical dramas on TV* (Film and Television Studies); middle (2000 words)

there are others that
are really specific er to the medical drama and to Cardiac Arrest okay first of
all is the way that privatization issues of privatization and the kind of
culture of the N-H-S is er understood through ideas of new management the
hospital manager is a kind of new figure er who arrives er er in the nineteen-
nineties now hospital managers are generally are generally speaking are
presented as a pernicious presence in the hospital they are interfering without
any professional knowledge of medicine they're fuelled by the ideology and
management speak of private business from which they were recruited and their
attempts to import that business culture er into the running of the hospital is
shown as directly hostile to the requirements of adequate and professional
medical care now interestingly Cardiac Arrest takes this development a stage
further er and says well it's not just it's not just inappropriate people
from business who are being recruited to run the hospital but it's sort of
anyone but doctors yes so in a sequence that was used to trail an episode in
the second series the older consultant Ernest Docherty er the old chap
recognizes the new and very young manager in the corridor the manager's about
eighteen years old okay er to no one in particular but really sort of to the
camera he says yesterday he was on the checkout in the canteen today he's
running the hospital yes so the inference is is kind of clear from that er er
er exchange that kind er professional paternal experience exemplified by
Docherty counts for nothing er but youth in a suit you know that's the future
that's the future of er hospital management okay so that's one discursive
context er now clearly that goes out of control a little bit in Cardiac Arrest
toward the end er where the hospital manager himself gets suspended and there's
this kind of Foucaultian sense that you don't know where power is yeah so they
have to bring in some lord governor from that we've never seen before in order
to sort out the the power conflicts in the hospital so even the managers
themselves are getting are kind of er accountable to some unseen force yes that
comes from outside the hospital er now the other discursive context is public
relations P-R in the hospital the importance of P-R for the hospital is also

indicative of its transition to a business culture so Cardiac Arrest staff are
regularly suspended for going to the newspapers to tell stories of mistreatment
there's er an anxiety about the prospect of medical incompetence being leaked
to the press and that kind of looms over nearly every medical decision there's
also the issue of H-I-V the revelation that some medical staff have er er H-I-V
er and there were kind of regular dramatizations of parents er er sorry of
patients finding this out that they've been treated by someone er with er H-I-V
and then er er kind of complaining about it so for
British medical dramas and that sort of indicates the way that British medical
dramas er are starting to pick up on that danger and anxiety about litigation
er relatively recent in Chicago Hope it's more or less the norm that patients
are expected to sue er their doctors er it's relatively recent in the British
er er medical drama so this prospect of litigation further er enhances and
intensifies that conflict between doctor and patient yes we saw the conflict
being described in The Nation's Health in terms of kind of a macho culture and
a and a disdain for the patient but now it's it's er more professionalized it's
almost it's about you know can i sue you if you do something wrong so every
decision er every medical decision has a kind of that kind of anxiety hanging
over its shoulder and of course there's a relation i mean these programmes use
news stories as plot stimulants so there is a relation to er more recent cases
and we're getting a lot more of these cases of d-, of surgeons
for examples in Bristol er not er meeting their quality targets er and clearly
that's going to er continue so all of these matters pe-, er and the final
discursive context i'll return to that a bit more in the seminars is rationing
N-H-S rationing okay so this is about the question about who deserves treatment
first yes if one has to prioritize er health care and medical attention which
patient deserves treatment and which patient doesn't now clearly in the outside
world there are issues about for example sex change operations and cosmetic
surgery and further down you know do you operate on a smoker or someone who's
eaten fresh fruit and vegetables all their life all this kind of issue about
choices yes in the N-H-S and this feeds in to er medical dramas and into
Cardiac Arrest okay so those are the discursive contexts now i want to talk
a bit more about er Cardiac Arrest and genre because i think the change in
Cardiac Arrest from attention to er issues
around welfare cuts in the welfare state to m-, to something that's more
focused on the welfare of junior doctors that shift of attention is also in ta-,
in parallel with a a another shift of attention that happens in other genres
er and that's toward an interest in the details of professionalism to the
details of professional life or more specifically the way in which professional
procedure the rules the laws the manners er the conduct of er professionals
becomes central to the content of many television programmes in other words the
interest of these programmes is in the way that these professional codes of
conduct are mediated through individual characters and examples of the sort of
professional genre would be The Bill a lot of The Bill is spent lot of
characters in time in The Bill is spent with characters discussing the the what
they can and can't do yes the rules of conduct yes what's appropriate to do
Casualty clearly er London's Burning er the professional genres ge-, genres
about
professional er er people and in general that er in the earlier nineties that's

concerned with the emergency services clearly now it's being er er opened up
a bit and and g-, and generalized so this and in other words the turn toward the
spectacularization of professional discourse takes place in the early nineties
and is er as i've said initially concerned with the emergency services in in
drama and later on in the documentary genres now this is er er er in the
medical drama this spectacularization of er professionalism er is er part of
one mode of er er er of the narrative the other mode is is something that's
more action based okay so what i want to think about is er if you like
different modes of mise en scĂ¨ne diffe-, it's almost different styles er on
the one hand there's the style er there's the mode which i call reflection
which is more concerned with the er spectacle of er er professional discourse
mediated through characters on the other hand there's the mode of action
which generally speaking is the immediate and intense delivery of of health
care to casualty er patients and these modes are attached to setting they're
generally specific to one place the hospital or less frequently the character
sometimes er characters it's quite rare in in in ward based medical dramas like
er E-R and Chicago Hope and Cardiac Arrest but sometimes the characters
you know er Doctor Greene will will go shopping or something and and and sort of
take the two modes with him so there'll be modes of action and reflection but
they've taken outside the hospital and that's quite rare er indeed w-, w-, the
space where the two modes kind of the transition from one mode to the other
where that takes place is the hospital corridor and Anne Karpf in the late
eighties in her book er Doctoring the Media argues that the the corridor it
becomes a central place in the er in the in the television medical drama where
anything could happen there's a kind of unexpected er things er happening in
the
periphery or in the background of a shot could suddenly become important er and
clearly one of the ke-, you know the k-, the the er the sort of classic er
icons of the genre is the is the is the the stretcher on a trolley bursting
through swing doors yes that's one of the key ways in which we see the
transition from reflection to an action mode okay so just to recap by
reflection i'm referring i'm concerned with sequences where medical staff are
discussing whatever is of narrative importance either between themselves or
with the patients so this mode is therefore evident by heavy reliance on
dialogue and it's often stylistically nondescript concerned as it is with
relaying standard delivered performances the action mode re-energizes style and
depicts the urgent treatment of medical cases and various er styles are
recruited to emphasize the contingency the immediacy and the urgency of those
cases in fact in that transition to action mode er the ward based medical
dramas delight in foregrounding
the radical contingency of accidents and the sudden turn for the worse that can
befall patients unlike the horror film where moments of gore liberation are
carefully prepared for by sound and image er the nineties medical drama profits
from the realistic assumption that accidents can happen anywhere any time so
the sudden event of an ambulance stretcher bursting through those double swing
doors is clearly the most familiar icon that signals that transition that move
into action mode okay just give you an example of that action mode this is from
Cardiac Arrest okay and th-, as i say the transition is sudden okay it's not
prepared for er this is a the most extreme example i could find okay and it's

quite er unsettling but clearly the pace of the cutting changes the lighting
changes we're introduced er exordited music is introduced er we're offered a
different style yes so it's an R-T-A accident an R-T-A
nm0063:
okay er so that's really there's no preparation for that moment where the the
tube goes in you don't that's just given to you and it's lit very very brightly
yeah so you don't miss you know you can't miss it er it's quite interesting
that sequence because i mean it's it's very very extended er and very very
excessive i think sort of shots of er er of of that woman in pain er how that's
used to balance er against Scissors' decision when he sees the driver of the
car who who ki-, who she dies obviously who ki-, he killed this woman er he
doesn't treat her he doesn't treat he doesn't treat the driver of the car
because the driver of the car is male is white yes he's er just made a lot of
money yeah i got a bit pissed 'cause i just made a lot of money yeah he's given
as many of the characteristics yes that are associated actually with that older
male culture as possible and Scissors therefore who's quite a good doctor yeah
and he refuses to treat him okay so there's a there's a
kind of balancing going on there there's a there's a s-, there's a you're being
offered you know should he be given treatment for causing that you know that
extreme level of pain so the the move from reflection to action takes place
generally speaking takes place in the hospital corridor er and of course the
hospital corridor's is the place between the unregulated outside world and the
152. regulated but falling apart inside

5. ahlct20 - *The French revolution* (History); end (2000 words)

first inkling of this idea of mass
warfare which is obviously such an important thing in the nineteenth and
particularly er the twentieth er er century so around that patriotism how do
you get people to how do you mobilize that enthusiasm obviously the revolution
has brought much in seventeen-ninety-three er how in seven-, in seventeen-
eighty-nine how in seventeen-ninety-three do you make people want to go out and
you know even kill themselves on the battlefield for er an entity France which
probably didn't mean very much to them er before seventeen-eighty-nine well
there are two arms to the strategy er of within France of mobilizing the nation
in this way i've sort of given some of the er things here er very si-, very
simplistically i would say radical social policies and terror okay let's start
with radical social policies 'cause they are often forgotten er because people
have a view of the terror
which is almost entirely er negative but if you were writing the history of the
welfare state you would make a big detour er into this period because it's
precisely in this period that the French legislative asse-, the French er
national convention and particularly this guy particularly Robespierre argued
that in order to give people something to fight for you've got to give them
something you've got to introduce the maximum in other words a ceiling on prices so
grain and bread is at an affordable price you've got to introduce a
whole welfare package for er families of er er of soldiers for the aged for the
infirm whole sort of set of new hospitals and all the rest of it a whole sort of
set of welfare provision er within this er period er so that people have
something to fight for and if they're not if they're not enthusiastic if

they're not keen then you have to frighten them into being keen as well that's
the other side you a-, the terror side is that you use
violence the violence of the revolutionary state er against the enemies of the
republic er both without and within so you've got the e-, the the idea of of
this su-, sort of new national er this new nation fighting against the er er
the the the the forces of counter-revolutionary Europe but within you've got
also a set of terroristic policies meant to keep the enemies of the revolution
quiet and even er in its more horrible e-, er exemplifications to liquidate
them so you have a revolutionary tribunal a special court where anyone accused
of a a counter-revolutionary offence will go and this becomes tighter and
tighter and more defined basically anyone can go er and have their head chopped
off by the by the summer of seventeen-ninety-four you have a committee of
public safety a war cabinet but also a sort of terror cabinet in which the
Robespierre faction the person Robespierre as i say who gets this sort of this
strategy of er war on the frontiers but er so-,
radical social policy give the people something to fight for let them rally
around the flag of the republic er er Robespierre dominates the committee of
public safety you've got er the maximum the law of suspects er sort of very m-,
very vague definition of counter-revolution and you've got these reprÃ©sentants
en mission deputies elected to the national assembly going into the provinces
and using violence against anyone who seems to be counter-revolutionary i mean
some of the famous ones people like Carrier in Nantes where he sort of puts
whole piles of priests and counter-revolutionaries on boats floats them out
into the middle of the River Loire and then pulls the plugs and so thousands of
people die or Lyon or indeed in in the VendÃ©e where people where basically in
certain you've got a sort of free fire zone essentially in many parts of of er
er Brittany and in some of the other areas of counter-revolution where if you
see anyone with a rifle in your hand in their hands
you shoot them if you're a a revolutionary soldier and you go through a policy
of s-, of burning houses down killing er civil populations and all the rest of it
that horrible side of the revolution horrible side of the revolution which
is however effective the Marseillaise is created the the French er national
anthem is created precisely at this time in in August i think by seventeen-
ninety-two er don't know if you've ever listened to the words of the
Marseillaise or or translated them it's all about blood flowing through er er
through furrows and things like that it is a v-, it's a marching song a
militaristic song er the idea's that French republic is an army a nation with
rights the citizen is a rights bearing individual but he's also an arms bearing
cit-, er cit-, citizen he bears arms to defend er the r-, the er republic and
this policy is successful because by seventeen-ninety-four er er what's
happening is that i should have put the third heading er as well
what's happening by seventeen er ni-, ninety-four is that the counter-
revolutionary armies are being driven back France there aren't any more sort of
troops or anything on French soil in fact the French are pushing them into
their own er into Europe as we'll see when talking about this er er next week
er so to a certain extent the terror has its justification you know this is a
horrible way a a horrible logic if you like the terror has its justification
and that it's successful it defends France against it it allows the it allows
France to stay geographically united even though socially and politically it's

very er divided and by the middle of seventeen-ninety-four you've got a a
choice it's open to you really if you're within er er France if you're as long
as you're keeping your head down if you're a counter-revolutionary obviously
but if you're a revolutionary you have two choices one of them is to say well
terror you know we don't like what's gone on in the terror but
it has been successful at least so let's go back to you know what it was before
let's go back and to sort of seventeen-ninety-two or seventeen-ninety
or something let's dismantle all this er sort of stuff all this sort of apparatus
of terror this apparatus of er er strong centralized government which has been
set up by the war emergency and yet there is that group and yet there is
another group er Robespierre is perhaps the most prominent and certainly the
most articulate of them who say no no turning back this is the time to create a
new republic that new man which we talked about in seventeen-eighty-na nine may
have been a new man of the age of liberty what we need is a new man of the age
of equality even though in other words the war is being won and the the the
sort of rationalization for terror is no longer there let's take things er
further what is very interesting and i i think it's also one of the reasons why
this paradox about the revolutionary le-, legacy is
so powerful and yet so difficult for us in the ni-, in the twentieth and
nineteenth and twentieth century er is that where Robespierre gets his ideas
from where this idea of a purification of the nation er of more radical social
legislation more equality within the er within the system is very precisely
from the Enlightenment the Enlightenment i've argued has created the sort of
conditions the social conditions and the ideology that the discourses which
make seventeen-eighty-nine er possible what historians get very agitated about
very divided about er very upset about sometimes is that the the the ideology
and the discourses of Enlightenment have also seemed to prove the pr-, provide
the justification er behind the reign of terror the idea that a new republic of
virtue that's what Robespierre is always talking about virtue er that one can
get a new civ-, er a new civic system of equality where everyone basically has
a sort of direct and equal relationship
to each other and in which the state sits over er er er above them and so er we
have a situation where Robespierre is sticking up and his supporters on the
Committee of Public Safety you know the these the storm centre the the the sort of
brain centre of the terror and much of the rest of the the political nation
are thinking well surely this is the time to draw back this is not the time to
to go on but such is the terror that there is not by late by the spring of
seventeen-ninety-four the sort of freedom of opinion freedom of speech which
you've had in seventeen-eighty-nine people are frightened that's this is why
you know there are a lot of those ideas about the terror being a sort of
protototalitarian system you know that that sort of fear in which people never
know whether there's going to be a knock on the door they're frightened of the
meaning of words where you know you can use the word er s-, er er er subject
instead of citizen and you'll be seen to be a counter-revolutionary
in which you can say i quite liked the Louis the Sixteenth and you'll end up
before the revolutionary tribunal so opinion opinion is no longer free so how
do you get rid how do you change it you have to get rid of Robespierre this is
what many of the people who got rid of him later say they say we couldn't do
anything you had to kill him there was no way out Robespierre has to go the

123. symbol of this new idea of of of revolutionary virtue has to be executed there
124. is a coup d'Ã©tat er on the n-, ninth of Thermidor under the new calendar the
125. twenty-seventh of July seventeen-ninety-four where he he h-, he is captured he
126. and they are all executed a gang of them are executed er the next day the the
127. people who've been the driving force the van if you like of the movement for
128. social regeneration and political regeneration social welfare policies but also
129. terror but also terror so you know very much the two sides are removed and one
130. can if you like the revolutionaries who get get the sense of going back so that
131. they can get go forward they've got over the political crisis they've got over
132. er the social divisions if you like of seventeen er ninety-three
133. to four they've fought back the the armies seventeen-ninety-five they can sort of
134. move forward without Robespierre without the option of a terroristic policy
135. hopefully at least and create er er a new political system in which those
136. virtues of seventeen-eighty-nine and seventeen-ninety-one those liberal er
137. equalities those lib-, liberal and free er free virtues of of seventeen-eight
138. eighty-nine to ninety-one er will be dominant and not the virtue er not the
139. liberty not the equality er as it's been interpreted er under Robespierre so
140. the very vocabulary in which we think in which revolutionaries in seventeen-
141. ninety f-, nineties think about these things but in which we into the late s-,
142. er late twentieth century are still thinking er about the er about er politics
143. what does freedom mean what does equality mean how do these two things actually
144. mesh in any political er system er these things have become in that sort of
145. short laboratory like period er of of just four or five years er up into the
146. open up into discussion they've become the thing fa-, the framework within
147. which er we all try and live okay have a nice weekend

6. ahlct017 - *Keywords in modern drama* (French); end (2000 words)

1. real flesh and blood individuals like ourselves
2. what what are characters well basically characters are sort of words on a page
3. perhaps this is one theory of characters i think it's a contentious theory and
4. i think you know we may decide that characters are real characters and they do
5. have real emotions er so i'm not particularly pressurizing you to think one way
6. or the other i think the the debate is quite interesting but i think we have to
7. recognize that when we're looking at some plays in the twentieth century er
8. characters are not fully rounded individuals er but rather they consist of
9. fragments of language this is again er what Artaud said er in his er Le
10. ThÃ©Ã˜tre et son Double the fact that er basically er characters er were not
11. really er sort of flesh and blood characters but they they they exterted a kind of
12. power er but i think er Artaud wanted to get rid of the psychology which er
13. lay behind the character and he wasn't very keen on the way in which
14. Shakespeare Shakespeare's
15. characters er analysed themselves so when Shakespearean characters are facing a
16. sort of predicament of one sort or another er they will tend to sort of er go
17. into a kind of process of self-analysis whereby they they explore the whole
18. area of of their of their conscious you know er to be or not to be er it's that
19. kind of thing you know er you know but i think Artaud said that this was kind of
20. unnecessary in the theatre er we don't want this kind of sort of er thought
21. and this kind of complexity let's just get back down to actions again let's

22. let's let's let's judge characters not so much in terms of what they think as
23. what they do in fact i think that's that's a very very big distinction there
24. something something of this kind o-, occurs in what we might call the Theatre
25. of of the Absurd er to which er often Ionesco has been attributed although
26. i don't particularly think that the that the the term Theatre of the Absurd is
27. always a very helpful one er Theatre of the Absurd
28. being er a recognition that er life has lost all its meaning er i i i think i
29. experienced this feeling very well when i was when i was writing up my PhD
30. thesis er i felt that sort of life life life had lost all its meaning but er
31. and er sometimes when we're writing assignments we think you know er what's the
32. point of all this er so what you do is to get the whisky bottle out and have
33. another drink don't you [laughter] okay er well except i don't like whisky so i
34. i i tend to sort of i have other things but i think er er [laughter] but
35. i think i think the er i i i think the thing i think the Theatre of the Absurd is well how
36. can we how can we go on from this point and life seems to be so
37. ridiculous doesn't it and er so theatre for the th-, for the for the absurdist
38. f-, for the absurdist writers like Ionesco theatre er is a kind of antitheatre
39. characters behave in totally ridiculous ways er at
40. the beginning of La Cantatrice Chauve er er which i think is translated er as
41. The Bald Primadonna some of you may know of by by Ionesco at the beginning of
42. that play you have er for example er two characters Mr and Mrs Smith who are
43. sort of discussing things and one of them says right you know it's kind of
44. gives the time i-, s-, it says like it's ten o'clock in the morning and of
45. course i mean what's the point of saying it because the clock's sort of
46. standing there right in front of you it's the kind of absurd exchange and
47. Ionesco took the the dialogue for La Cantatrice Chauve er from an English
48. textbook when he was learning English he's saying well you know this is a
49. totally sort of absurd textbook how could anybody learn English from this i
50. know i'll write a play about it which is act-, whi-, whi-, which er was w-, was
51. know i'll write a play about it which is act-, whi-, whi-, which er was w-, was
52. more popular Les Chaises The Chairs is another one where chairs are sort of
53. progressively sort of moving towards the end of the stage until the
54. characters fall off the stage wonderful but but these are not really of course
55. this is this really what happens it might be it might be what happens in some
56. lectures i'm slightly out of touch with er with sort of university er lectures
57. at the moment so er this may well be what happens you know people fall off
58. chairs and all sorts of things but er i think basically er er this is pretty
59. absurd stuff isn't it really er another example of Samuel Beckett in a play er
60. Samuel Beckett in a play called er La DerniÃ¨re Bande which is translated
61. fetchingly as Krapp's Last Tape er so er La DerniÃ¨re Bande er where the
62. character er basically is suffering from er constipation because he's eaten too
63. many bananas [laughter] er so er what's this got to do with real life well it's
64. it's just a a kind of escape isn't it it's the characters i mean they're
65. they're we might not
66. recognize very much of ourselves in characters on the other hand we what we do
67. what we do feel is that the charac-, er the characters do communicate in some
68. way and language is not the way perhaps that we would use language but on the
69. other hand it reveals something about our sort of inner selves doesn't it
70. i would say perhaps just as a kind of er as as a kind of final thing on character

71. er we have to look also at the actor or the actress that lies behind the mask
72. because the actor is not particularly subservient to the character now in other
73. words er i mean er one of the one of the big preoccupations of actors in the
74. past has been to say well er am i actually playing this part faithfully to the
75. original i-, is i-, is my is my portrayal of Shylock or Portia in The Merchant
76. of Venice is that how Shakespeare would have wanted me to er to portray it but
77. the answer is well does it really matter i mean does it matter if er you know
78. how we actually perform a a role lies er very
79. faithfully er against the original i mean we can do it in different ways er
80. somebody who actually er wrote a lot on er on on on actors and the theories of
81. acting was somebody called Jean-Louis Barrault Jean-Louis Barrault and Jean
82. Jean-Louis Barrault did all sorts of interesting things i mean he s-, he
83. suggested for example that actors and actresses should er cultivate the art of
84. double breathing so in other words er er the characters have to breathe twice
85. er once for er once for themselves and once for the character that's a really
86. strange kind of concept to grasp isn't it the idea of double breathing i mean
87. in the smog of sort of central Birmingham i find it i find it difficult to
88. breathe once never mind twice really but i think you know er this kind of whole
89. concept of sort of breathing is i-, is pretty pretty pretty central to what
90. Barrault is doing er so language is a kind of bodily movement w-, er so
91. characters
92. have to use their bodies in certain ways and use their gestures er Barrault
93. spoke of an alchemy so alchemy extracting gold from from solid material so er
94. Barrault spoke about an alchemy of the theatre er in which the actor or the
95. actress was was in central position Artaud er used to er exploit his his actors
96. in quite strange ways i mean he used to make them scream at the top of their
97. voices and they used to sort of practise sort of shouting er and er it all
98. sounded rather sort of strange and and and problematic really er but noises
99. screams and shouts strange sort of er things er these are are obviously very
100. central to to the kind of thing that Barrault is is coming out with i'd like to
101. conclude now by hoping that er as a result of the things that i've spoken about
102. this morning the the very er unilinear er structure which i presented with you
103. with at the beginning of the lecture namely author text characters language and
104. audience er i hope you can see that er this is er an ideal but
105. rather inaccurate picture of what actually goes on in in twentieth century
106. drama Antonin Artaud was a w-, was a watershed in this development he's totally
107. disregarded by some critics i think in a book called Modern French Drama by
108. somebody called David Bradby who i have recommended in your er in your your
109. documentation packs i think Artaud gets maybe a couple of pages mention in a
110. whole book about French drama i think that's perhaps er underestimating
111. Artaud's importance i think Artaud's ThÃ©Ã˜tre et son Double is central to the
112. rev-, to the reversal of this particular paradigm which we're actually actually
113. looking at and i think it does sort of repay quite c-, quite careful attention
114. but some people considered that Artaud was rather mad and this particular
115. picture will demonstrate his rather er strange appearance certainly so er
116. Artaud near the end of his life Paris nineteen-forty-eight er a rather sort of
117. peculiar twisted sort of gnarled character he at this by this stage he'd had
118. many electroshock treatments er because of his sort of in-, his supposed
119. insanity er er so he had er he had E-C-T treatment for a number of years and he

was he was sort of sent to asylum in a place called Rodez er rather
unfortunately er had he not been he might have come up with some more
interesting things er characters er these ones the-, these characters come from
er a play by Jean Genet called er er Les Paravents okay the only reason i'm
showing you these is to show how characters are actually sort of made into
almost kind of grotesque sort of high comic figures er through what they wear
so you can see le gendarme the policeman okay er sort of you know puffed out in
all his sort of regalia er and er basically i mean it's all er it's all very
sort of high high drama sort of totally contrived really and the the the last
one that i'd like to show you is is basically this one it's er it's a picture
from er a play by er Paul Claudel called Le Soulier de Satin er Paul Claudel
worked in quite close col-, er collaboration with Jean-Louis Barrault so it
actually shows you you know the the dynamism which er er actresses are er er
sort of captured sort of through through Barrault's training so again high
drama er and er r-, revises to an extent the kind of expectations that we have
i'm looking forward to speaking to you next week er at which time i shall f-, i
shall focus probably more more particularly on Beckett and Sartre i have tried
to pack quite a lot into that lecture i hope you don't mind er and er possibly
next week i'll leave a little bit more time for questions so we can deal with
anything that might have come up in these in these lectures thank you very much
for your attention